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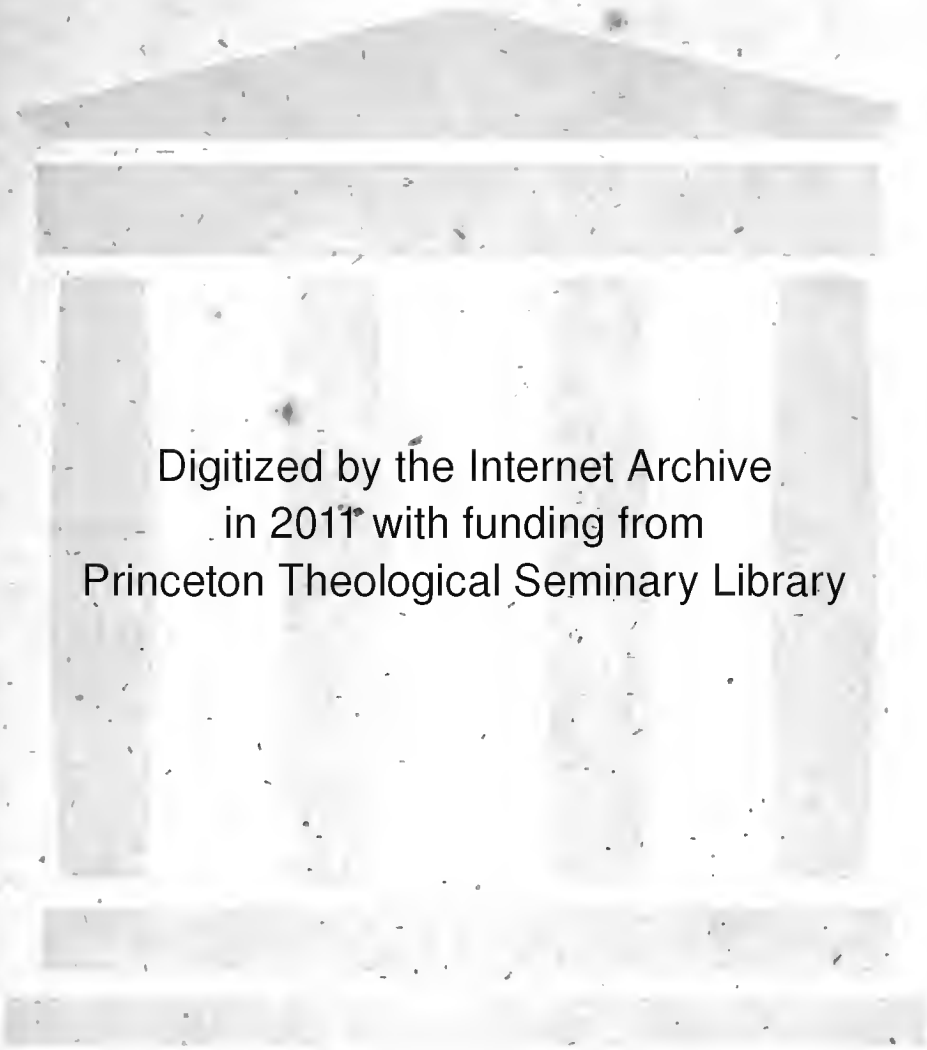

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THE

PRIMITIVE DOCTRINE

OF

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

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THE

PRIMITIVE DOCTRINE

OF

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

BY

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PREFACE.

In a Treatise which I published last year, I discussed the predestinarian language of Scripture in general. I now come to a particular instance of that language, viz., the term "*Regenerate;*"—a term which, taken in this connection, will be found to have a particular meaning; which meaning of the term regenerate, will explain and decide the doctrine of *baptismal* regeneration.

On the important subject of Divine Grace, and the rule on which it is bestowed, two great positions claim our attention; one of which the Church imposes, and the other tolerates. The position which the Church imposes is, that God gives regenerating grace to the whole body of the baptized [1]; the

[1] The phrase that "all the baptized are regenerate," is used throughout this treatise as expressing the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. I am aware that it does not express it accurately, because in cases of *adult* baptism, the doctrine even of baptismal regeneration does not allow the individual to be regenerate, unless he has fulfilled the conditions of faith and repentance; and, therefore, inasmuch as all adults may not fulfil these conditions, the doctrine even of baptismal regeneration does not assert that all the baptized are regenerate. I use the phrase, however, for the sake of convenience and shortness, and because no argumentative consequence is involved in it, as compared with a more correct one. The more correct mode of stating the doctrine of baptismal regeneration would be to say that all persons baptized in *infancy* were regenerate. But whether I used this or the former and more summary statement, would make not the slightest difference to the argument of this treatise from first to last. The hypothetical nature of the assertion of regeneration, as made of the baptized, is exactly as evident made of all persons baptized in infancy, as it is if made of all the baptized. For the body of persons baptized in infancy are evidently not all good or holy persons; which is the relevant point, and that upon which the argument turns. Under such circumstances the use of the shorter and more summary phrase is a legitimate saving both to the writer and the reader.

position which the Church tolerates is, that God gives grace sufficient for salvation, only to some of this body. These two positions, inasmuch as the Church contemplates the case of one and the same person holding both, cannot really be in collision with each other; yet apparently they are. Some explanation, then, is evidently wanted to reconcile the two, and show their consistency. I have endeavoured to give this explanation. And for this purpose I have entered fully and carefully into each of these two positions or doctrines. The predestinarian doctrine I examined in a treatise published last year: the doctrine of baptismal regeneration I examine in the present treatise.

Now I can imagine it said, "Why not take statements as they stand? Here is a plain assertion in our baptismal service; take it in its plain meaning, and do not trouble yourself with elaborate explanations and inquiries."

But the answer to this is obvious. It is very easy and very proper to take a statement *as it stands*, if there is no other statement either required or allowed, to which it is opposed. But if there is, our attitude is immediately altered. We cannot help ourselves, then, but are obliged, instead of taking *one* statement as it stands, to go into and examine *two* statements. The line of simplicity is over, and that of explanation has come; and, the surface once broken, there is no knowing how much work there may be underneath. Single truths may be taken simply; but if we have to combine conflicting truths, we must go more or less deep for the point of junction; for truth is like a tree, the more space it covers above ground the further it goes below, the more comprehensive it is, the deeper its root or basis is. Do those who say generally "take statements as they stand," see difficulties as they stand? or rather, do they not live in a world of truth of their own, wholly different from the real one?

The course they recommend is doubtless much the simpler one, and truth also would be much more simple if it was not so complex. But truth being the complex and conflicting system which it is, this general maxim is for us visionary and impracticable. Let persons, then, who repeat this maxim beware that, in saying "take statements as they stand," they do not practically mean "take statements without understanding them," take them by themselves, out of their place, apart from their relation to other truths.

This will explain, then, why, with a view to reconcile the two positions on the subject of grace, to which I have referred, a treatise on predestination was needful—a treatise to a certain extent metaphysical. To reconcile these two positions, it was necessary to enter fully into both; and it was impossible to go at all fully into the predestinarian position without a certain amount of metaphysics.

I am aware that metaphysics are looked upon with suspicion by many sincere religious minds; that they regard all inquiries of this nature as fanciful and gratuitous speculations, useless, if not dangerous, to the cause of religious truth. But a little reflection will, I think, show that a distinction should be drawn here. Metaphysics may doubtless be carried into subtleties and refinements, which tend to perplex and confuse, rather than clear, religious truth. But within certain limits they are both useful and necessary for explaining religious truths, even primary and fundamental ones, even Bible-truths. I do not mean to say, of course, that such truths may not be understood for all purposes of practical religion without such kind of reasoning, but for intellectually embracing them (in that sense in which such truths may be embraced), for seeing them in their consequences and relation to each other, some metaphysical thought is necessary. The doctrine of grace, revealed in the Gospel,

takes us immediately into the question of the Divine Power and Human Freewill, which cannot be made other than a metaphysical question. Nor can these two great ideas be at all fully or adequately embraced in themselves, in their contradiction to each other, in the consequences of each, and the mutual check of these consequences upon each other, and the general balance which ensues, without a train of reasoning sufficiently metaphysical to require very close and accurate attention. Yet, from first to last in such an inquiry, we are never out of sight of the most broad and elementary truths of our religion, such as we carry with us everywhere, and have always in a certain sense in our minds.

Within certain limits, then, and on certain subjects, metaphysics are but another name for *thought;* and if we are to have such an understanding of Bible-truths, and the fundamental ideas of our religion, as I have described,—and persons who profess to be theologians ought not, perhaps, to have much less,—we cannot avoid the obligation of going through some kind of metaphysical thought.

I have referred to elementary Bible-truths. It may be said that predestination is not one of these truths, and that therefore we need not undertake the examination of it. But whether elementary or not, predestination is undoubtedly a Bible-truth. Nobody who reads St. Paul's Epistles can deny that. And, moreover, the doctrine of predestination is only the doctrine of *Grace* under another name.

To a person, then, who objected to metaphysics in connection with theology, and put aside such reasonings at once as wholly unnecessary and gratuitous, I would simply say, Do you wish to embrace, in an intellectual way, the elementary ideas of your religion? If you do not, there is no obligation on you to do so; you may accept them for all the purposes of practical religion, without such an understanding.

But if you want intellectually to embrace them, you must not object to this style of thought; for you might as well try to comprehend a proposition of Euclid without mathematical thought, as thus to embrace the Bible doctrine of grace without metaphysical; involving, as this doctrine does, the ideas of the Divine Power and man's free-will, and their relation to each other. So far as metaphysics are a simple entering into, and obliging the mind to dwell upon, and lay hold of, certain great and fundamental ideas of your religion, so far they are simply the natural exercise of your reason upon religious truth, for the legitimate and modest object of a rational comprehension of it. Do not, then, summarily reject such metaphysics as these.

I have spoken of Bible theology; I will speak now of Patristic. If one father has, in the theological movement of the last twenty years, been quoted and appealed to more than another, it is St. Augustine. Yet I must be pardoned if I say that this constant appeal to his authority has not involved much apparent acquaintance with his system of doctrine. By his system of doctrine I mean that great system of which he was the first expounder in the Church, and which will always be connected with his name. St. Augustine's typical interpretations of Scripture, his devotional writings, and other portions of his works not connected with his characteristic teaching, have been read and quoted; but that great doctrine which constitutes his peculiarity as a teacher and crowned his theological career, which fixed him alike in the chair of mediæval and Protestant theology, and to the inculcation of which the principal energies of his life, as a thinker and writer, were devoted, has hardly been looked into. With the exception of a faint allusion to it here and there, Augustinianism has been left untouched, and persons have been content with the vaguest ideas of

what Augustine said or did not say, on what was to him the most important and absorbing question of his whole theological life. With a general impression that he taught predestination, nobody appears to have examined at all the particulars of his doctrine, to have compared his statements, elicited his grounds, or made out his system and *rationale.* This was not, of course, to *know* St. Augustine, for persons cannot be correctly said to know an author if they have not made themselves acquainted with his distinctive and characteristic teaching. But want of acquaintance with St. Augustine was not of itself, perhaps, a matter of so much consequence. What made it of consequence was, that he was often quoted as a witness to a particular doctrine to which his doctrine of predestination bore an important relation—a relation intimately affecting the mode and sense in which he held the former doctrine;—I refer to the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. It ought to have been ascertained what his doctrine of predestination was, before he was brought forward so confidently as a witness to a doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

In this state of the case, I endeavoured, however imperfectly, to fill up the gap which had been left, and to explain the distinctive portion of St. Augustine's theology. But St. Augustine, it is no incorrectness to say, was a metaphysician, and it was impossible to explain a metaphysician without some metaphysics.

So much for the treatise I published last year. The present treatise enters into the other position which was to be examined; that, namely, of baptismal regeneration. But before I launch the reader into particulars, it may not be amiss to give him a general outline of the argument of the treatise, leaving him, if he feels inclined to pursue the subject, to fill up the sketch out of the body of the work.

The question of baptismal regeneration belongs to the general question of literal interpretation, and must be settled by those rules by which the question of literal interpretation in other cases is settled. All baptized Christians are asserted in Scripture to be regenerate. I say this with the full knowledge that my statement requires explanation; but the explanation is not difficult. First, then, under the phrase "*asserted* to be" regenerate, I mean to include all those places in which Christian communities are *addressed as such;* in which, that is, the fact is implied, or taken for granted, rather than stated. And this may fairly be done, for a reference to a fact is equivalent to asserting it, and it is all one whether you say something of a person, or address him as being it. Again, under the term regenerate, I include a class of expressions synonymous with it, and obviously signifying or implying a new or second birth. Thus, Christians are addressed by St. Paul as "dead to sin"; but a death implies that a former life is over, and that the life which the Christian is living now is a new or second life, which, of course, involves a new or second birth. They are addressed again as "dead with Christ," "buried with Christ;" and of these expressions the same may be said that was said of the preceding one. Again, they are addressed as "risen with Christ," and a resurrection is the commencement of a second life, or a new birth. They are addressed again as "quickened," as "alive from the dead," "alive unto God,"—expressions which are obviously synonymous with regenerate or born again. The members, then, of the Christian societies to which St. Paul writes are *all*, without distinction, addressed as regenerate or born again; and therefore it may correctly, and with perfect truth, be said, that Scripture asserts all baptized Christians to be regenerate.

Now, how is this assertion to be interpreted? It may be

said that we must go to the Fathers for this purpose; but the Fathers throw no new light on this language, for they simply repeat it. They use substantially the same language which Scripture uses, only somewhat expanded and enriched; and therefore, instead of interpreting Scripture, the Fathers have themselves to be interpreted as much as Scripture has to be. It may be said again that our own baptismal office at any rate interprets this language; but our baptismal office again simply repeats it. For the interpretation of this assertion of Scripture, then, we are thrown back upon Scripture itself, that is to say, upon the ordinary and received rules or principles of interpretation which we apply to Scripture.

Now the received rule for the interpretation of Scripture is, that where a text can be taken literally, consistently with sound reason and facts, the literal interpretation has the precedence; but that where this cannot be done, the literal interpretation must give way for another.

Let us take, for example, the maxim in Scripture, "Resist not evil." The Quakers interpret this text literally, and so condemn all war and the use of arms, as contrary to Scripture. But to this it is replied, that society could not be maintained and human interests protected without the liberty of appeal to force; and therefore, that, in the case of this text, the literal meaning cannot be the true one. Again: the Roman Catholics interpret the text, "This is my Body," literally; but to this it is replied, that on any principle of literal interpretation, our Lord's body was His visible natural body, then present at the Last Supper, while the bread was the material bread on the table; that, this being the case, it is contrary to possibility that one thing can be another; and that here again, therefore, the literal interpretation cannot be the true one. And in the case of many other texts of Scripture, we reject without much scruple the literal mean-

ing, where we see that such meaning is contrary to sound reason, or to other texts of the same Scripture.

Indeed, however natural and proper a general bias in favour of literal interpretation must be admitted to be, the rule of literal interpretation must be seen, when we calmly examine it, to need many checks, and to be only as a limited and qualified rule a useful and true one. If we adopt it exclusively, or abandon ourselves to it, it becomes instantly as foolish, wild, and extravagant a principle of interpretation as any that could be named,—the fruitful source of all kinds of mistakes and excesses, and even the greatest follies and absurdities in religion. This has evidently been the result very often in fact; but it will be useful, perhaps, to enter a little into the reasons of it.

Persons, then, who demand a literal interpretation of statements and texts of Scripture, on the mere ground that it *is* the literal one, forget to begin with one very important and fundamental consideration, and that is, the nature of human language. To judge from their law of interpretation, one would suppose that language had nothing else to do but to express simple matters of fact in the simplest way. Such may have been the original stock of human language; but, if it was, there has been a very large aftergrowth upon it. Human language is a growth, a structure, an accumulation of a wonderful and complex kind; it contains the most apt and versatile machinery for the expression of all the relations in which the human mind stands to persons and things around it; not only the perception of matters of fact, but all the postures and attitudes of thought. It invents as it advances new modes of statement, and accumulates means and expedients for giving force to expression; it seeks not only to inform nakedly and correctly, but to strike, attract, and impress. All this is an advance upon the original mode

of literal assertion, and often a departure from it. Thus metaphor is a mode of expressing truth, which is a departure from the literal one; and thus the proverbial and didactic department abounds in terse and pithy forms, which, taken literally, would be very extreme pieces of advice indeed, and anything but safe rules to act upon, but which are not designed for such interpretation; the extreme form being fixed on for the purpose of startling, seizing the attention, and occupying the memory, and the correction being left to common sense to provide. A great positive advantage is thus gained by a departure from the literal style; while it is properly assumed that people are reasonable enough not to be misled by the mere form, which they are intended to take in the spirit in which it is selected. And what goes on thus obviously in the departments of metaphor and maxim, goes on more or less in the whole of language. Every department of language abounds in forms and modes of speaking, which are not designed to be understood literally, but which must be taken with a salvo. A sort of tacit understanding thus goes on, as it were, between the constructors —if it be allowable thus to impersonate them—of human language, and those who use and apply it, *i.e.* society at large. The user knows what the constructor intended, and does not misunderstand his expression, or take it to mean more than it really does. And this knowledge is gained so gradually, and so easily, so entirely by merely living in society, talking to others, and seeing the meaning of what they say to us, that it becomes at last an unconscious intuition; nor are we in numberless cases the least aware how much of this understanding in reality we practise, and how largely we have to interpret what we hear in social conversation or read in books. We should be indeed surprised, did we examine the naked grammatical meaning of a large part of speech and writing, how little

purely literal statement there was in language, and how much of it had to pass through this medium of tacit explanation. The intercourse of man with man is almost one act of mutual interpretation, in which allowance is made for forms of speech; but the process is so familiar to us, that we forget that we are interpreting, and seem to ourselves to be taking only literal statements in their literal sense.

To apply these observations to the interpretation of Scripture. One often hears one party and school in religion charging another with not interpreting Scripture literally. "You are explaining away the sacred text," it is said; "you are not taking plain words in their plain meaning; the inspired writer says so and so, you must take him to mean what he says." Now it may be the case that the literal meaning of a passage in Scripture is the true and natural meaning; and that an interpreter, in opposing the literal, may be guilty of violating the true and natural, meaning of a passage. An enlightened and candid reason must determine where this is the case. But to say that because such a meaning is the literal, it therefore must be the true one, is a most serious error; because it may often be the very reverse. The inspired writer need not always confine himself to the original stock of human language when he inculcates a duty, or informs us of a truth. He may, and he often does, use its aftergrowth and later formations, — those parts of human language which come to us in the first instance accompanied by a tacit understanding, and are originally designed for an interpretation different from what they grammatically bear— language, therefore, which to interpret literally is simply to violate the very design and meaning of its employer. The writer himself does not mean himself to be understood literally; he is only using some mode of speaking which language has naturally in its progress and history contracted:

he does not, *e. g.*, mean to be understood so universally as he actually expresses himself; he supposes that his readers will modify his statement for themselves; he employs some excess of expression which he supposes they will of themselves correct and reduce to its real signification, some figure of which he assumes they will be able to see the substance. In such cases, then, we must set aside the literal understanding of a passage for one to which the general growth and expansion of language directs us. Nor can we on many occasions do greater injustice to an inspired writer than by understanding him literally.

Thus, to take the maxim in Scripture, already quoted—"Resist not evil." It is evident that the injunction here is given thus universally for the sake of proverbial force and effect; the universal form being one of those forms and modes of speaking which mankind have adopted and use when they want to impress some particular truth, or inculcate some line of conduct very strongly upon others. The form proceeds upon this idea, that the truth or duty in question must be made as much as possible to absorb and occupy the mind of the hearer, who is too biassed against it to make such a monopoly at all dangerous, the danger being in fact the other way: so exceptions are not, for the time, recognised; for this would be to divide the hearer's attention, and give him an excuse for indulging his bias against the truth, by giving a partial sanction to it; so that he would be thinking of the exception, just at the time you wanted him to think of the rule. The universal form thus meets us continually in conversation; and Never do this, it is said, or Always do that, and the like. Scripture, then, adopts this form in the case before us, and says absolutely—"Resist not evil." But it would be absurd to imagine, therefore, that we were intended literally never to resist evil. Mankind are too

prone to resistance in the case of any yoke or grievance; they are impatient, headstrong, violent. When quietness and passiveness, then, are inculcated upon them, they are inculcated universally, because the duty stands in need of all the force that can be given to it, and must be made to monopolise their attention as much as possible. But Scripture supposes that this will be understood by a reader, and that he will not give to the form in which the maxim is put, more than was intended by it.

The same remark may be made on another form in which this duty is put in Scripture: "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any will take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." Here the form selected is not the simply universal, but the symbolical one. An extreme case is put, and is made to stand for a forcible and striking image of the duty. But, having answered this purpose, it would be most unreasonable to insist on the extreme instance itself, and take literally what was only intended to be symbolical.

And so with respect to the text, "This is my Body." Mankind have in all ages largely employed forms of statement which are not literal, for the expression of truths; and Scripture follows the general usage. It would be unreasonable, therefore, to suppose that we were intended to accept, at whatever cost to common reason, the literal interpretation of this text. So far, indeed, from being the natural interpretations, are not all these literal interpretations of Scripture language I have mentioned, most unnatural, forced, and artificial? Are they not evidently a *strain* upon the language of Scripture, instead of the easy and natural explanation of it? Does not Scripture leave us to our common sense, to modify and correct for ourselves, the naked grammatical meaning of

many of its injunctions and statements? And are we using this common sense, and obeying the intention of Scripture, when we insist on the naked grammar; when we refuse to this language the medium through which it was intended to be seen, and which is, in fact, its legitimate complement, without which it is defective and incomplete language?

Now to bring these considerations to bear upon the subject before us. The question of baptismal regeneration comes under and belongs to the general question of literal interpretation, and must be settled by those rules upon which the question of literal interpretation in general is settled. On the one side it is maintained that the assertion that all baptized persons are regenerate must be taken literally; that a plain statement must be understood in its plain meaning, in which meaning it asserts a fact. On the other side, it is maintained that this assertion must not be understood literally, but hypothetically, as a charitable presumption made respecting the whole body of the baptized. The question of literal interpretation, then, in the case of this statement, must be decided by the same rules by which we should decide it in the case of any other statement or text of Scripture. Can it be interpreted literally, without prejudice to sound reason or facts? If it can be, let it be; but if it cannot be, then we must take some interpretation of it which is not literal, *i. e.* the hypothetical one; that being in the present case the alternative. We interpret numberless other texts of Scripture differently from their literal meaning; nothing is more common; and, therefore, why should we not do the same in the case of the present statement, if circumstances require it?

Now in the case of the assertion that the whole body of the baptized are regenerate, there is one consideration, which absolutely precludes a literal interpretation, viz., that such an interpretation would be opposed to the plainest facts. The

term regenerate involves in its Scriptural meaning real goodness and holiness; St. John saying that "whosoever is born of God sinneth not," and "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world;" and St. Paul saying that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they* are the sons of God;" and that "he that is dead (*i. e.* dead to sin, and alive unto God, an expression which is equivalent to born again or regenerate) is *freed* from sin," and cannot "live any longer therein." But it is quite evident that the whole body of baptized Christians are not good and holy men. Just as a literal interpretation then would, in the case of the text "Resist not evil," be contrary to the plain needs of society, and, in the case of the text "This is my Body," to the possibilities of things, so, in the case of the present assertion of Scripture, it would be contrary to facts.

The literal interpretation, then, being impossible,—in this state of the case, the consideration, that was adduced above, of the nature and constitution of human language, comes in to help us to the right and true interpretation of the assertion. Human language is, as I have said, a complex creation, and contains forms and expedients for expressing all the attitudes of human thought. But the attitude of presuming something about another, which we do not know in fact, is a common attitude of the human mind, which has come in along with human intercourse and society. This being a natural attitude of the human mind, then, language undertakes to express it; and it expresses it by means of a peculiar kind of assertion;—an assertion, in form, literal and matter of fact, but seen, when taken in connection with the circumstances and whole context, to be really hypothetical. As human language contains the universal assertion for didactic, and the metaphorical one for illustrative purposes, so it has the hypothetical one for presumption; and public

and private life, conversation and books, abound alike in it. It is common to suppose or presume men to have all kinds of good qualities, when they may or may not have them in fact. A man in society addresses his next neighbour, whom he never saw before, as if he were an excellent and good man, and assumes the fact in his whole tone and manner. The orator addresses a whole crowd, as all honourable men; and national poets speak of whole nations as heroic and magnanimous.

The form of presumption then being so common, familiar, and recognised a one among mankind, Scripture adopts it, and speaks of bodies and communities of men on the hypothetical or presumptive rule. Scripture speaks of all baptized Christians as good and holy men, born of God, born again, risen again, dead to sin and alive to God. It is impossible to interpret such statements literally, as this would be making Scripture assert what was contrary to fact. And this being the case, the alternative of the hypothetical interpretation becomes necessary; while at the same time the structure and machinery of human language, and the general usage of mankind, suggest it as the natural and obvious construction.

I have assumed in this argument that which is the turning point of the whole question, the meaning of the word "Regenerate." I say turning point of the question, for according as one sense or another is attached to this word, the regeneration *literally* of all the baptized is either consistent with facts, or plainly and obviously opposed to them. Here then we come to what is really the fundamental question in this whole controversy — the meaning of the word "*Regenerate.*"

The key, then, to the meaning of the word "Regenerate," is to be found in the Predestinarian language of Scripture. Scripture is (as I have explained in my treatise on St. Augus-

tine) in one department of its language predestinarian. In *another* department of its language indeed it puts forth free-will; but in *one* department it is predestinarian and opposed to free-will. This two-sidedness is a remarkable characteristic of Scripture, as compared with the general tone and aim of human writings, especially theological ones. Theologians generally write to forward some one truth, which they maintain singly, and argue for exclusively. They construct a scheme and system upon that one, and then reject all other and counter truth, as interfering with their system. Their aim is to be compact and systematic, and they are afraid of any disturbance and any appearance of inconsistency. But Scripture is the opposite of all this. Scripture is not afraid of being inconsistent, and contradicting itself,—I mean apparently and as far as language goes. Truth, as apprehended by our present faculties, contains opposite and irreconcilable elements, and consists of tendencies of thought, which can never be brought to a common goal. Scripture then simply puts forward truth, as we at present and with our limited faculties can embrace it. And on the subject now before us, it puts forward two opposite truths, which it maintains each in its place, —that of absolute predestination, and that of free-will.

Scripture thus being in one department of its language predestinarian, *i. e.* teaching the doctrine that man's righteousness is a simple creation of God, imparted as an absolute gift to those to whom, from all eternity, He decreed to impart it, we find a certain class of terms in Scripture based upon this doctrine, and reflecting it. The "elect," and "predestinate," are persons who are thus *made* good and holy by God; goodness and holiness being the necessary qualifications for that eternal life to which they are destined and chosen. The term "new creature" openly expresses this doctrine, meaning

as it does a good and holy man; while it declares this goodness and holiness to be a Divine *creation* in the soul.

To this class of terms, then, in Scripture, belongs the term "Regenerate." The term "Regenerate," as used in Scripture, involves actual goodness and holiness, St. John plainly and expressly declaring that "every one that doeth righteousness is born of God," while "whosoever doeth *not* righteousness is *not* of God."[1] But while the term "Regenerate" involves actual holiness, it also, by the very force of the term, declares this actual holiness to be simply a Divine creation in the soul. For evidently no one can give birth to himself, either a first birth, or a second. He must receive his birth from another: he must receive his holiness therefore, if this is a birth, from another, *i. e.* from God.

This, then, is the meaning of "regeneration" in Scripture, viz., holiness, imparted indeed, but still actual and real, and not merely a capacity for it. And this meaning of actual holiness is so strongly and so clearly stamped upon the word in Scripture, that one would have thought before-hand there could be no doubt about it. St. John says over and over again, as plainly as language can express, that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, and whosoever sins is not of, *i.e.* born of, God. And St. Paul says that the sons of God are those who

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[1] It would be vain to endeavour to escape from the meaning which regeneration bears in these texts, as being actual holiness and goodness, by saying that St. John means that *so far as* a man is regenerate he is holy and good. Such a remark as this, so far from at all showing that regeneration does *not* involve actual goodness, is only another mode of saying that it *does*. For if a man is actually good, so far as he is regenerate, he can only be so because regeneration involves actual goodness; the assertion would be simply untrue of him, if it did not. If *so far as* a man is virtuous, so far he obeys God, virtue must involve obedience to God. Such a remark as this only interferes with the sense of regeneration in this way, viz., by withdrawing the reader's attention from the real question before him, which is that of the sense of regeneration, to another totally different and wholly irrelevant question, viz., who are regenerate. The reader, as soon as ever he hears the phrase, "so far as a man is regenerate," begins to think of *persons* who are more or less regenerate, not of the sense of regeneration itself.

are led by the Spirit of God, and addresses throughout his epistles the regenerate as dead to sin, servants to righteousness, alive unto God and risen with Christ;— expressions which plainly involve actual goodness and holiness in those to whom they are applied, and not the mere capacity for them.

Again: that this is the sense of the terms "regenerate," and "child of God," appears not only from the use of these terms themselves, but also from another and opposite set of epithets, based on the same metaphor of birth or sonship. If "child of God" means only a capacity for good, then "child of the devil" means only a capacity for evil. But is this the meaning of "child of the devil" in Scripture? When our Lord told the Jews that "the devil was their father," did He only mean that they had a will determinable to evil? When He said that they made their proselytes tenfold more the children of hell than themselves, did He mean no more than this neutral condition? When St. Paul addressed Elymas the sorcerer, as "thou child of the devil," did he mean only that Elymas had free-will? So interpreting "child of God" and "child of the devil," it would appear that there was not much difference between them, and that a man might almost as well be the one as the other. The two expressions only stand for the two aspects of the one condition of free-will; the former for it as determinable to good, the latter for it as determinable to evil. It is evident, then, that "child of the devil" means an actually wicked man; and if so, it follows that "child of God" means an actually good man.

But such is the force of a pre-occupying theory, that though Scripture speaks on this subject in words so clear that he that runs may read, all its statements have been interpreted another way, and the terms "child of God" and "regenerate" have been taken to mean something wholly different

from what Scripture means by them. Regeneration, or being a child of God, has been understood as involving only a *capacity* for goodness and holiness. It has been seen *in limine* that regeneration is not a work of man; *that* is apparent from the very force of the word; and therefore nobody disputes, but all agree, that the new birth is not a human acquisition but a Divine gift. But regeneration being a Divine gift, this characteristic of it has been an insuperable bar with many to their acknowledging that regeneration can be actual holiness. "No," they say, "this at once shows what regeneration *must* be; that it *can* be no more than a capacity; for if it were actual holiness, that would be to say that men were made holy without any original efforts of their own will; which would be to admit the doctrine of irresistible grace and predestination." An exclusive theory of free-will has thus blinded them to the natural meaning of these terms as used in Scripture, and, so to speak, set them in opposition to the grain of Scripture; so that they are always rubbing against it instead of following it. The key to the meaning of regeneration is contained in this very predestinarian language of Scripture. The predetermination, then, not to see and acknowledge this language, has deprived these interpreters of the natural key to the meaning of this term, in the absence of which they have made a key of their own, and constructed a forced and artificial meaning of the term regenerate, as signifying a capacity only,—a meaning based upon the doctrine of free-will, and representing that doctrine; whereas the term regenerate does not represent the free-will side of Scripture doctrine, but the predestinarian one.

Upon this basis, then, is constructed that whole account of regeneration or the "new nature," as it is called, which is given by one religious school among us. The "new

nature" is represented as a wonderful and mysterious change which takes place in the soul at a particular time, that viz. of baptism; in consequence of which the person becomes after baptism something very different from what he was before; he has undergone a kind of transformation, and a stroke of Almighty power has altered him from a natural to a spiritual being. But wonderful, sublime, and mysterious as this change is, it does not involve any moral change whatever; I mean that the person over whom it has passed may not be at all better, morally, than an unregenerate person. The individual thus transformed may be the most profligate of men, abandoning himself to every vice, and indulging every vile and gross passion. This new nature, this change from the natural to the spiritual being, is a capacity, power, endowment, talent, which, no more than any ordinary gift of nature, makes the man better of itself, but depends for that effect on the use and improvement which the possessor in the exercise of his own free-will makes of it.[1]

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[1] "Regeneration is a gift of grace bestowed by God, the result whereof is the renewal of man's nature . . . that recreation of our common nature which was effected in Christ . . . the refashioning of all the parts of that common nature which is borne by every child of Adam . . . that gift of grace which the Father of all mercies was pleased to embody in the manhood of the Incarnate Son, that thereby humanity at large might be reconstructed . . . When this work (regeneration) is wrought in individual men, what is effected is not the complete and instant change of their whole nature, but the infusion of that Divine seed of a higher humanity, by which their spiritual progress is commenced. Such a gift does not exclude the action of man's own responsibility. It is but to place men in a higher state of trial, by the infusion of a principle above nature. The new seed must have time to overcome the old principle of corruption; its existence must be recognised, its growth encouraged. Those who deny regeneration in baptism, are ready in common to admit that the children of Christian parents are placed by birth in a state of higher Christian privilege than others. . . . Does not experience prove that principles lie dormant in the mind, which it requires fitting occasions to call forth? Does not this happen perpetually in respect to natural endowments, the capacity for art, the faculties of judgment. And why then may not the same thing be expected in the case of a higher nature, which is supernaturally engrafted on the ancient stock of their kind?" (Wilberforce's Doctrine of Holy Baptism, pp. 10. 22. 24. 27. 33.) This is a description of regeneration as a new and mysterious spiritual capacity simply, and not as actual goodness.

To this new nature, thus understood, are immediately applied all the terms and epithets which in the New Testament cluster around the term regenerate, and are used as illustrations of, and synonyms for, it. It is supported with all the resources, and enriched with all the variety, of Scripture phraseology. The death unto sin, the new birth unto righteousness, the being risen with Christ, being a new creature, being a member of Christ, being alive unto God, and the like expressions, are all appropriated to this new power, and used for the purpose of swelling and magnifying the importance of this new nature, simply as a *capacity*, as showing its mysteriousness, sublimity, depth, and unknown and incalculable resources and opportunities contained in it.

Now here I will first remark upon the use of the term "new *nature*," which we do not find in Scripture, in the place of the Scriptural term "new birth." At the same time, I will not quarrel with a word, provided it is understood that the word nature stands for the same thing as the word birth.

Upon the mysterious, neutral, indeterminate capacity, then, impressed at a particular instant upon the soul, which is here understood under the term new nature, I will observe that such a conception of the new nature of the Gospel appears to me to be a radically mistaken one, and not only unsupported by Scripture, but directly conflicting with it. When St. Paul describes the new nature which is enjoyed under the Gospel, he does not describe it as a mere change of capacity, but as a change of actual life and inward disposition. He does not describe a new nature which is only an endowment or talent, and may be used or abused, improved or neglected, but a new nature which is an actually good and holy habit of mind. He describes a new nature in this sense that it is now natural to the individual to live holily; natural to him

as distinguished from being a struggle *against* natural inclination to do so. A man may act aright against his natural inclination, when his corrupt desires strongly impel him to sin, and consequently when the avoidance of sin is a struggle and an effort to him; and such action as this has its own value and praise; but then, according to St. Paul, a man, so long as he acts in this way, is under the *law*. Under the *Gospel* he is in a new state of mind, and has what is far more valuable and precious than the power of acting right against inclination, viz., the inclination itself to act right. To love and serve God is now no longer a struggle and effort to him, but a pleasure; and he does his duty not because his conscience obliges him, but spontaneously, and because he loves it. He takes no more pleasure in sin, and therefore it is no longer any self-denial in him to avoid it. He has become the slave of righteousness, as he was before the slave of sin, *i. e.*, is carried to the service of God by as strong and commanding an impulse or desire as that by which he was formerly drawn into sin. St. Paul, then, obviously does not describe the new nature of the Christian as a mere capacity for holiness, but as holiness itself, and holiness in its most advanced and perfect stage.

Nor does Scripture, I remark next,— and this observation will be only a consequence of the preceding one,—describe the new nature of the Christian as in itself a mysterious and unintelligible thing. It is described as consisting in holy dispositions, desires, and habits; in the love of God and man, and in the union and harmony of the human will with the Divine. But holy dispositions, desires, and habits are not mysterious, but perfectly intelligible things; they are states of mind of which we are directly conscious, and of which we feel the movement and the working. How this state of mind arises, indeed, and how these desires and dispositions

are produced within us, is represented as something unknown. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The cause is obscure then, the effect is plain and intelligible; the source and origin of this new nature are hidden from us, but the new nature itself is declared to consist in that which everybody can understand and feel — the absence of sin and the presence of goodness; he that is born of God doth not commit sin, and that wicked one toucheth him not. Causes are hid from us, even as regards the formation of our own characters. We know not how it is that we become what we do become in general temper and frame of mind. But we know and feel the temper, the disposition, the character, when formed. That is no secret to us, no mystery. The new nature, then, of which the Bible speaks is no mystery in itself, but only in its origin; whereas the new nature, on which I have been commenting, is represented as in itself an incomprehensible mystery.

And as this sense of the new nature, enjoyed under the gospel, is a mistaken one, so the application of the collateral language in Scripture to swell the mysterious importance of the new nature in *this* sense is an erroneous and unauthorised application of Scripture language. The collateral language which Scripture employs is designed to illustrate a new nature, not in this sense, but in the other. The Christian is said to be dead to sin, and risen with Christ, to have put on Christ, to sit in heavenly places in Christ. This is very appropriate language for illustrating a new nature in the sense which I have claimed for it. The man who takes no more pleasure in sin may be called with perfect propriety dead to sin; he has the insensibility of death to its

temptations and allurements, and rejects them as a corpse would by not feeling them, while the natural man has all the keen and quick susceptibilities of a living body to such attractions. In like manner he may properly be said to have risen with Christ, because he is in the enjoyment of a new and a lofty spiritual life. But how can such expressions as these be employed with any justice or aptness to describe a new nature in the sense of a mere capacity or power which the worst of men may have in common with the best? How can we say of a man who lives in the habitual indulgence of the worst vices, which he neither desires nor endeavours to forsake, that, because he has the power if he chooses to forsake them, he is therefore dead to sin, and risen with Christ? Such a monstrous perversion of language would never approve itself to any one who did not come to this subject with his mind preoccupied with a particular view, determining him to reject, at whatever cost, the presumptive mode of applying the term regenerate and the collateral terms to all the baptized, and gain the point that they should be asserted really of all this body. Nor is it any defence of such a misapplication of Scripture language as this, to illustrate a mere capacity, that this capacity is represented as a very mysterious and sublime one. Persons appear to suppose, so long as they represent this new nature, with which men are endowed at baptism, as *mysterious*, they may say anything whatever about it, without any chance of error; but they should remember that so long as they represent this new nature as a capacity merely, their representation of it as mysterious is no justification at all for their applying language to it which is plainly not applicable to a mere capacity.

It is obvious, indeed, that this whole account of the "new nature" proceeds upon an opposite principle to that on which

the Scripture account of it proceeds; that it assumes as its basis a doctrine of free-will, whereas the Scripture account assumes predestination or omnipotent grace as its basis. For Scripture represents the new nature as being (what by the force of the term it is) a Divine gift, and yet being actual goodness, which is to assume the omnipotence and absolutely creative power of grace.

Here, then, is the fundamental mistake, the root of all this false interpretation of the Scripture account of regeneration. This interpretation will go on so long as men refuse to see what stares them in the face in reading Scripture—its predestinarian department of language. Let them only see that, and they will have no difficulty in seeing that Scripture describes regeneration as actual goodness, *although* it describes it, by the force of that term, as an imparted one. The plain and express assertions of Scripture to this effect will then be seen. But it is in vain that Scripture is plain and express to the effect that this Divine gift *is* actual holiness, so long as men are preoccupied with an idea that actual holiness *cannot* be a Divine gift. They will go on to the last not seeing the plainest assertions of Scripture as to the nature of regeneration: and they will go on to the last explaining away all those terms which in Scripture are synonymous with regeneration, saying that a death unto sin means a power of abandoning sin, if the sinner chooses; and a new birth unto righteousness a power of living righteously; that being crucified in the old man means a power to exercise self-denial; being alive unto God means the capacity for serving Him; and being a new creature means having new privileges and means of grace. They will go on so misinterpreting the plainest language of Scripture because their theory compels them to do so; setting them, to begin with, in opposition to the whole line and tenor of Scripture

on this subject, so that at every step they come against the grain. Ask any plain man what dying to sin means, and he will tell you. There is that in the expression which immediately tells its own meaning. But no meaning of a word was ever yet plain enough but that a preoccupying theory could give it another and a different one. Is not even the term "saint" tampered with because it is applied in Scripture to the same class to which "regenerate" is applied, and is so thought to endanger the sense of that latter word? and is it not understood by some to mean called to a holy life, or separated by profession from the rest of the world? But to doubt what saint means is the same as if one doubted what "good" meant. And if one doubts what "good" means, what word is one to be sure of? Yet here are men of reading, scholars, able divines, thinking a long time whether they can afford in consistency with their system to allow that good means good. And if they came to a correct conclusion after their long consideration one would not have much to complain of; but, unfortunately, they arrive at the conclusion that "good" does not mean "good."

And here I cannot but express some surprise that persons who on the baptismal question take their stand so strongly on the rule of literal interpretation, should commence their own explanation and argument with so palpable and conspicuous a violation of this rule; and support a literal *application* of the term regenerate to all the baptized by a total distortion of the meaning of the word regenerate itself. For I would put it to any unsophisticated person, who did not come with a bias to the subject, whether it was a natural use of language to call wicked men regenerate, born again, children of God, and members of Christ?—to call them so, not hypothetically, and as a charitable presumption *before* we *know* they are wicked, but literally, and when we know

the fact of their wickedness? Did even those who most strongly maintain such an application of these terms examine fairly their own feelings, in this use of them, would they not find certain misgivings in their own minds about it, some little internal shrinking, as they so applied it? Do they feel quite comfortable in calling an abandoned sensualist dead to sin, the slave of corrupt passion free from sin, the hardened man of the world alive to God, a child of hell a child of God, and a member of Satan a member of Christ? Yet all this they are obliged to say if they insist on the literal interpretation of the statement, that all the baptized, even the wicked, known to be such, are regenerate; for these are but synonyms of regenerate, as our own formularies tell us, when they say that the grace of baptism, or regeneration, is being a "member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" that it is a "death unto sin, a new birth unto righteousness, and a state of salvation."

"Oh! but," it will be replied, "we have an *explanation* of our use of these terms." I am aware you have, and that is just what I say; you insist on the rule of literal interpretation in this matter, and the first thing you do is to claim an exception from it; you allow no explanation, and you begin yourselves with explaining! But what is your explanation, and will it much mend matters? You say, then, that the whole spiritual condition described in these terms is not to be taken for the condition itself, but for the power of attaining to it. Thus a man is dead to sin if he has the power of dying to it, and freed from sin if he has the opportunity of gaining freedom from it, and alive unto righteousness if he has the grace enabling him to live righteously, and in a state of salvation if he has the means of attaining such a state. But what a strain upon language is this! What is the obvious and

natural meaning of being dead to sin?—it is certainly having no longer any pleasure in sin. No man, then, who lives in sin can by any stretch of meaning be said really to be dead to it; no man can be said to be really alive unto righteousness who is still dead in trespasses and sins.

And see, as I have already observed, how this principle of interpretation acts upon another set of terms in Scripture of the same kind, but an opposite direction. If a man is a child of God because he has the power of becoming so, a man is a child of the devil for the same reason. And in that case the best men are children of the devil, as the worst are children of God, and the same men are children of God and children of the devil too. The literal interpreters, then, of baptismal regeneration commence with this specimen of literal interpretation, distorting words, explaining away texts, and setting in motion a whole interpretative machinery, which, if generally applied, would reduce the simplest statements of Scripture from plainness to ambiguity, and from ambiguity to nonsense.

The conclusion is that, so far from the rule of literal interpretation being imperative in the case of the statement in our baptismal office, as a matter of fact neither side uses it; but whether we take this statement as a literal, or whether we take it as an hypothetical, assertion, in either case we depart from the rule of literal interpretation. Those who understand this statement as hypothetical *profess* and *own* this departure, while those who take it as a literal statement do not. And the literal interpreters depart at a different *point* in the exposition from that at which presumptive ones do; the latter departing at the *statement*, and the former departing at the chief *word* in it. But, whether confessed or not confessed, and whether at one point in the exposition or another, a departure there is from the rule of literal interpre-

tation; and the only question is, which departure you will choose. Will you understand the *statement* that the baptized are regenerate as not literal, and interpret the *term* "regenerate" naturally; or will you understand the statement as literal, and interpret "regenerate" artificially? I would be content to ask any unbiassed person which alternative he would prefer as more agreeable to common sense,—the natural interpretation of *terms*, with only a familiar and recognised kind of departure from literal truth in the *application* of them, or the literal application gained at the cost of distorting and violating the sense of the terms? Which would be the more easy and natural explanation of the expression in the Prayer Book, "Our religious and gracious Queen,"—that which should explain it as designed to be a literal assertion, whatever character the reigning monarch might be of, and, in order to procure this literal force for it, should interpret "religious and gracious" as meaning having the capacity for religion, and having the opportunity of obtaining grace: or that which, understanding these terms in their natural meaning, as signifying religious in fact, and endowed with grace in fact, should explain the assertion as a charitable presumption or supposition? I would say, then, to one who insisted on the literal force of the statement in the baptismal service, as distinguished from the presumptive one, who is it who really explains away this statement? Do I, who take the word regenerate in its natural meaning, as signifying a real change of character, being dead to sin, and entered on a new life of holiness and goodness, and only take it as applied to the individual in a particular mode—a mode of common, familiar, and universal use, viz., that of charitable supposition?—or do you, who explain away the word regenerate itself, understanding it in

an artificial sense of your own, wholly different from its natural one?[1]

My remarks in this Preface have been devoted to two questions,— that of literal interpretation and that of the meaning of the word "regenerate." I will now make one or two remarks on some obstacles which stand in the way of a correct conclusion on the subject of baptismal regeneration, and the sense of the statement in our baptismal office.

The great and fundamental obstacle, then, to a correct conclusion on this subject, I have already mentioned, which is, the non-recognition of the predestinarian language of Scripture. But, besides this, I will mention another important obstacle.

The whole nature of the rite of baptism, whether we consider the conditions attached to it, its unity or that it cannot be repeated, or the symbol involved in its external

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[1] Great stress has been laid, in the baptismal controversy, on our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus, and the text "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," is often quoted to prove the literal conveyance of regeneration in baptism. But if persons would attend to the simple construction of this sentence, and to the statement made in it, instead of going off upon one phrase, "born of water and the Spirit," they would see that this text does not assert anything of the kind which they think it does. For this text does not say that every one who is born of water, is born of the Spirit, but that those who are born of water *and* are born of the Spirit, shall enter into the kingdom of God, or have what is necessary for that entrance. This latter statement is a totally different one from the former, and does not the least even imply or contain it. It asserts two conditions for entering into the kingdom of God, but it does not say that a person who has fulfilled one of these conditions has fulfilled the other. There is one condition said to be necessary for this purpose, viz., "being born of water," *i. e.*, being baptized: and so far as this text asserts this condition, it simply asserts what all parties agree in, that baptism is generally necessary for salvation. There is another condition pronounced to be necessary, viz., "being born of the Spirit;" and that also is universally admitted. Then what does this text assert, but what all parties agree in, viz., the necessity of regeneration, and the necessity (by all interpreted to be only *general*) of baptism. Thus much is clear from the simple construction of the sentence. But take, in addition, the *meaning* of "being born of the Spirit," and "being born again," and another reason will appear, and that an irresistible one, why this text cannot be interpreted to signify that whoever is baptized is born of the Spirit, and born again. For "being born again" and "being born of the Spirit," involve in their Scriptural meaning, as I have shown, actual holiness and goodness, and not merely the capacity for them: and all the baptized are not holy and good persons.

form, points to a final state, as distinguished from a merely preparatory and enabling one as the one connected, whether literally or hypothetically, with baptism. Were the grace connected with baptism only a new spiritual capacity or assisting grace, depending on the man's free-will for its use and cultivation, what would be the meaning of annexing the conditions of faith and repentance to baptism, as necessary to be fulfilled in order to receive the grace connected with it? For does God exact conditions before He gives assisting grace? Certainly not. He gives it to sinners in the very depth of their sins, and in order to draw them out of them. The very circumstance, then, of conditions being attached to baptism, points to something more than an assisting grace, or spiritual capacity, as the grace connected with it. Again: why should not baptism in that case be repeated? God repeats His gift of assisting grace over and over again; and, therefore, if baptism is only supposed to give assisting grace, why should not baptism be repeated? Such a law could at any rate only be laid down for convenience sake, and could not be made essential to the sacrament, as it is made. Again: the form of the rite evidently typifies more than a state of improved capacity in the person baptized, viz., an actual change and ascent from a life of sin to that of righteousness, a spiritual resurrection. The whole nature, then, of the institution of baptism, points to more than a preparatory state as the one connected with it, viz., to a *final* state of actual holiness, into which the baptized person is supposed to be, by God's grace, admitted, as the reward of faith and repentance; so that now he can no more fall away: not that I shall insist here on the *finality* of the state, but only on the fact that it is a state of actual holiness, and not the mere capacity for it.

But while the *doctrine* of baptism points to this conclusion,

the practice of the Church with respect to baptism has rather overlaid the doctrine, and diverted attention from these characteristics of the Sacrament. These characteristics of the Sacrament belong to it, in its primary use, as designed for adults; for adults alone can show faith and repentance; adults alone can rise from a life of sin to that of righteousness. But in practice infant baptism has grown to be the general rule, and adult the exception. These characteristics of the Sacrament, then, have been, with the prevalence of infant baptism, comparatively withdrawn from attention; for though infant baptism retains a representative faith and repentance as its conditions, the representatives are not so impressive as the reality: and the grace of baptism or regeneration has practically figured before men's minds as a grace bestowed without conditions. The type, again, contained in the external rite has by the custom of sprinkling been lost altogether to the rite; and even in language it has become a vague generality, rather than the representation of a change supposed to take place in the baptized person himself. With the comparative withdrawal, then, of these characteristics of baptism, the conclusion to which they point has been lost sight of; and, losing these arguments which proved it to be more than a spiritual capacity, the grace of baptism has come to be regarded by many as such a capacity and no more.

There have been other subordinate obstacles in the way of arriving at a true conclusion on this question.

1. The term "regenerate" has been separated too much from that whole class of terms which are connected with it in Scripture, and may be called synonyms for it, and has drifted into an isolated position, as if it were altogether different in sense and import from the rest of this class of terms. Thus, to say that a man is "*born again*" is quite a different thing, with many, from saying that he is "*risen again*."

When our Lord, then, in his conversation with Nicodemus, uses the term "born again," He means a certain grace or imparted spiritual *capacity*, which a man must receive in order to attain holiness of life; but when St. Paul uses the expression "risen again," he means holiness itself,—the man's resurrection *in fact* from a carnal to a spiritual disposition of mind. And so, when all the baptized are asserted to be risen again, that, they admit, is an hypothetical assertion; but when they are all asserted to be born again, that, they think, is a literal assertion. As if "risen again" and "born again," did not mean exactly the same thing; and, supposing one statement to be taken hypothetically, the other must not be also.

2. Another great mistake in the treatment of this whole question has been the not considering it *in connection with Scripture* at all, and so the loss of that light which Scripture language throws upon it. No reasonable person can doubt that when St. Paul addresses the saints in Achaia, the saints at Ephesus, the saints at Philippi, the saints at Colosse, *i. e.*, by implication asserts all the members of these churches to be saints or righteous men, that his assertion is to be understood as a charitable presumption, and not as literal. No reasonable person, therefore, can doubt that when the same Apostle addresses all the members of the Churches to which he writes, as dead to sin, risen with Christ, alive unto God, and the like, that the assertion is hypothetical and not literal. These being synonyms for regenerate, then, no reasonable person can doubt that the assertion of regeneration of all baptized Christians, is in Scripture hypothetical. But the very same persons who would naturally and as a matter of course construe the statement thus, as occurring *in Scripture*, think it altogether a different kind of statement, when they see it in the baptismal office. Then it seems wrong to them,

dishonest, evasive, to regard the statement as hypothetical. They have a conventional meaning of the word regenerate connected with *its place in the baptismal service*, according to which the word in this place means a different thing from what it means in Scripture. In Scripture, therefore, the word regenerate implies real goodness and holiness, because St. John expressly says so; but in the baptismal service it does not mean actual goodness, but only a grace enabling to be good. And so, according to the meaning of the term in Scripture, the assertion that all the baptized are regenerate is meant *in Scripture* to be hypothetical; according to the meaning of the term in the baptismal service, the assertion is literal in the *baptismal service*. As if the word regenerate must not mean exactly the same thing in the baptismal service that it does in Scripture, and its application to all the baptized were not also of the same kind in both.

And so of the language of the Fathers. The language of the Fathers on the subject of baptismal regeneration has not been taken in connection with that of Scripture, and seen in the light which the latter throws upon it; but it has been taken by itself: and in this isolated position a traditional and artificial interpretation of it has grown up. The meaning of the assertion in Scripture of the regeneration of all the baptized, is, as I have said, very clear and obvious. When we come to the same assertion, then, in the Fathers, if we carried the Scriptural assertion with us, we should carry with us that which explained the Patristic one. It would then appear that their language on this subject, however rich, copious, and rhetorical, was simply the continuation of the obviously hypothetical and presumptive assertion in Scripture. But not carrying the Scriptural key with them to the Fathers, persons have given one sense to an assertion in Scripture, and another sense to the same assertion in the

Fathers. If St. Paul speaks of being dead to sin, *St. Paul* means by it *real* holiness; but if a father speaks of a death to sin, the *father* means a mysterious imparted *capacity* for holiness. If St. Paul speaks of "having put on Christ," *St. Paul* means having entered really on a holy course of life; but if a father uses the same expression, the *father* means, a grace enabling a man to enter on a holy life. And the metamorphose will apply to a whole succession of terms and phrases, which in Scripture will be taken to mean one thing, and in the Fathers will be taken to mean another. And with the sense of the terms, their *application* also is viewed as different: and when St. Paul addresses all the baptized as having died to sin and having put on Christ, that in *St. Paul* is an hypothetical assertion; but if a father does the same, in the *father* it is a literal assertion.

And here I cannot but remark on the mistake which has been made in the plan, which has prevailed so much lately, of *catenas, i. e.* of simply collecting as many assertions of baptismal regeneration out of the Fathers, as could be found; as if that were all that was necessary for clearing up their doctrine on the subject. Such a line of exposition was radically defective: because the question was not the *amount* of their language on this subject, but what this language itself meant: and this point was not to be proved on one side or another by simply accumulating extracts. Because it is nothing to me, if I ask the meaning of a particular assertion, to be shown twenty, or thirty, or a hundred, other instances of the same assertion: a statement is not explained by being simply repeated; the question still remaining to be answered —What is the meaning of it? In what mode is it made, the literal or the hypothetical?

3. I have said that the alternative, in the case of regeneration, lies between two senses, one involving actual

holiness, and the other only a capacity for it. Now, if persons clearly embraced the fact of this alternative, they would come to a proper understanding with themselves on this question; they would proceed at once to compare these two interpretations, and would choose the one which had least difficulties. And in that case, I cannot but think, that they would find the difficulties on the side of considering regeneration only a capacity insuperable, while those on the side of considering it actual holiness were very small. They would find that in the one case they had a whole array of plain Scriptural characteristics of regeneration to explain away; while on the other, the only difficulty would be the hypothetical application of the term, which, considering the abundance of precedent for this mode of speaking, would be no great one. But unfortunately they do not clearly embrace the fact of this alternative. They go on with a vague indefinite sense of regeneration as including both of these alternatives at once; each of which they use according as they want it. When the greatness of the baptismal gift is the point, regeneration is actual holiness, *i. e.* is described without qualification in all the strong language, Scriptural and Patristic, of which actual holiness is the natural meaning. When the universal conveyance of it in baptism is the point, then regeneration is a capacity only, it being contrary to facts to suppose it more. They thus go on combining two contradictory meanings of the term; thinking of it as involving actual holiness, and as *not* involving it; as being more than a capacity, and as being *only* a capacity. And such indefinite conceptions as these are very difficult to deal with; the *vis inertiæ* of inconsistency is strong; and the hammer of reasoning beats in vain on the rock of ancient confusion. You may talk to a person in this state of mind ever so clearly, without effect. You will say, "a thing cannot

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be, and not be at the same time." If regeneration is actual holiness it cannot be anything *short* of it; if it is more than a capacity, it cannot be only a capacity. He will answer you by pointing to a volume of extracts from the Fathers. You will then repeat the argument, and say,—"Very well, you are quite right; that is all correct language; now, then, what do you think it *means?* Is regeneration, as there described, actual holiness or not actual holiness, more than or only a capacity? Choose one of these meanings, for you cannot choose both." But the appeal will be still often ineffective. Those elementary reasonings, which are so simple and clear on paper, are often the most difficult to embrace in practice; and the mind of your opponent, after a momentary conception of the truth that contradictory things cannot be true together, will relapse, like a spring, into its old attitude, in which it practically thinks they can be.

From what has been said, it is sufficiently clear what is the nature of the following Treatise, and what is the conclusion at which it arrives.

The nature, then, of the following Treatise is terminological. It is strictly confined to one object, the ascertaining of the meaning of a word,—the word regenerate.

The conclusion at which it arrives is one which follows immediately upon the meaning of the word regenerate being ascertained, viz., that baptismal regeneration is a high supposition, made by Scripture, and continued by antiquity, respecting the whole body of the baptized,—a supposition that this is a pure, spotless, and holy community, and all its members saints and holy men:—a conclusion which, if true, will dispose of the question, whether or not the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is held by the Church of England. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is the rule of Scripture and the Church, that this supposition is to be made

respecting all the baptized. And there can be no doubt that the Church of England makes this supposition, and that every parent and sponsor acquiesces in it.

And this conclusion will harmonise the two great positions on the subject of Divine Grace, to which I referred at the outset; the position which the Church imposes that God gives regenerating grace to all the baptized; and the position which the Church tolerates, that God gives sufficient grace for salvation only to a certain portion of this body. A reader of St. Augustine cannot at first understand how it is that he maintains the latter position, and yet maintains everywhere baptismal regeneration; and that without any sign of a peculiarity in his sense of baptismal regeneration, or difference from antiquity in it; or the least apparent idea on his own part of any difficulty in holding the two together, or need of explanation for it. But here is the solution. The assertion which is to be reconciled with predestinarianism in St. Augustine is not a literal, but an hypothetical assertion; and in this combination there is no difficulty. But had baptismal regeneration, as understood in St. Augustine's age, meant a certain grace literally enabling all the baptized to attain salvation, St. Augustine must have seen the contradiction of this doctrine to his doctrine of predestination; and could not have held both together, and still less have held the two, with such apparent unconsciousness of any disagreement between them.[1]

I cannot but observe, too, that had baptismal regeneration been commonly understood in St. Augustine's age in the same

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[1] Wall considers that St. Augustine used the term regeneration only in a technical sense of admission into the visible Church. "Whereas, some people have expressed a wonder at St. Austin, that he should hold that all the baptized are also regenerate; no man living can read him without perceiving that he uses the word *regenerate* as another word for *baptized*, and that this with him would have been an identical proposition; as if one should say now-a-days, 'all that are baptized are Christened.'"—Infant Baptism, vol. ii. p. 187.

literal sense in which it is taken by one religious school now, it appears morally impossible that St. Augustine's doctrine of predestination should have been overlooked by the Church. If their account of baptismal regeneration is true, St. Augustine's doctrine of predestination was in plain and palpable contradiction to a fundamental doctrine of the faith. Then it must have brought down summary condemnation upon him, as a manifest heretic, and one as audacious and presumptuous as the Church had yet seen. The theological career of St. Augustine is indeed a perfect prodigy of heresy, upon their *rationale*. How could such a subverter of the faith have been tolerated? How could he have been allowed to speak? How was it that his mouth was not stopped instantaneously? But he was not only tolerated, but admired and deferred to. I do not say that this was *for* his doctrine of predestination, but only that it was not prevented by it; that that doctrine was not regarded as heretical, and did not deprive him of universal respect and commanding authority.

And here I would willingly stop, but I can hardly avoid, before concluding this Preface, making some allusion to an event intimately connected with the subject of this treatise, I mean the Gorham judgment.

The baptismal controversy has slept now for some time in our Church, and the feelings excited by that judgment have in a considerable measure subsided. So far so good. But the controversy still sleeps, rather than is dead. A large portion of the clergy protested strongly against that judgment at the time, and as no sign of any change of opinion on that side of the church has appeared, that I am aware of, in the interval; I must presume that the same portion of the clergy protests now, though the continuance of the protest may be quiet and silent. Indeed, it is sufficiently evident that, while more than one Bishop openly rejects that judgment, a large

number of the clergy regard it as an incubus on the Church, from which they vaguely hope she may one day be relieved; though if they fairly examined their own minds they would find that they entertained themselves no real expectation that she ever would be. For do they think that the clergy themselves, were they polled, would be in favour of a reversal? Do they think Convocation would be? They know the contrary too well. They know that a large section of the clergy agree in this judgment, and that another section would maintain it for the sake of those clergy who agreed with it, and who would feel themselves burdened in conscience by the imposition of that interpretation of the baptismal formula from which that judgment gave relief, and many of them, perhaps, bound in conscience to leave the Church in consequence. They know that under these circumstances a reversal of the Gorham judgment would produce a disturbance and convulsion of the Church, of which no one could foresee the consequences; and that clergy and laity, Convocation, and Parliament, would be alike opposed to a step which would bring on such a catastrophe. Thus, protesting against a judgment which they know never can, and never will be, upset, they quiet their minds, some by the sensible argument that all Churches have their blots; some by an argument not so sensible, that the Gorham judgment is not the judgment of the Church; and some by thinking as little about it as they can. It is indeed most unreasonable to speak of the Gorham judgment as if it were the judgment of the Committee of Privy Council, as distinguished from being the judgment of the Church; because it is evidently the opinion in favour of it *within* the Church, and *among the clergy* themselves, which supports, maintains, and establishes it. But on whatever grounds the protesting party may submit to the fact, it cannot be regarded but as a serious thing that a

large number of clergy, headed by Bishops, and by other persons of great weight and distinction, should be in opposition to a decision on so important and even *fundamental* an article of Christian doctrine as that of baptismal regeneration is considered by many to be. Under these circumstances, then, if the Gorham judgment really rests on a solid theological basis, it cannot be otherwise than opportune to show it; for while it still continues to be a large source of uneasiness, we are now sufficiently removed from the excitement and heat of the late controversy to be able to give an argument on the subject a calm and impartial hearing.

If the conclusion, then, at which this treatise arrives, is true, the judgment of the Committee of Privy Council in the Gorham case is correct; for that judgment only pronounces to be allowable an interpretation of the baptismal office which is here maintained to be the right one. The judges in the Gorham case, indeed, neither were, nor professed to be, theologians. But they brought to the consideration of the question before them qualities and attainments eminently calculated for dealing with it; strong sense, and a knowledge of language — a practised estimate of the force and value of statements, phrases, expressions, and forms of speech. I do not say that such capacities and attainments were qualifications of themselves for judging on *all* theological questions; but on that particular one it appears to me that they went a long way in so qualifying; because the question at issue in the Gorham case was one of language, — a question respecting the force and value of a particular statement in our baptismal office, — and whether, on the whole, and under all the circumstances, it did not admit of a particular construction which was objected to. Men of such practised acquaintance with language, knew that language abounded in statements and forms of speech which were not to be taken literally. They

saw, therefore, the untenableness of the imperative demand for the literal interpretation of the statement in the baptismal office, when common usage everywhere sanctioned the hypothetical kind of assertion, and our own Prayer Book contained undoubted examples of it. But the case of the movers against Mr. Gorham, resting as it did entirely on the general claim for literal interpretation, fell when that ground was disallowed.

The position which those who brought on the Gorham contest defended and maintained in that contest, was this, that it was necessary to believe that God conferred upon all baptized persons a certain grace or spiritual power sufficient to enable them to attain salvation; which grace was called regeneration, or a new nature. Now here were two serious mistakes.

1. It was a serious mistake to assert that it was necessary to believe that God gave all Christians this sufficient grace in baptism; because it is not necessary to believe that God gives all Christians this sufficient grace at all. This latter or general position was assumed in the special one relating to baptism: but this general position is altogether untrue. I mean that it is *necessary* as an article of faith to hold this. The Church has left this an open question, by her toleration of predestinarianism.

Here, then, was an error of philosophy and theology. It has indeed been a fault of the High Church party in the English Church, from the first, that they have been too hard upon, and have not sufficiently entered into and appreciated, the grounds and reasons of predestinarianism. The Caroline divines show this defect, in the shape of a certain Arminian taint; and their successors among us still show something of their over-bias and exclusiveness on this question. The predestinarian position is treated as a simply fanciful and gratuitous creation; and not at all as a system which has

true and real grounds, as far as they go, for its conclusions. It is forgotten that predestination is but the other side of the truth to free-will, and that the arguments for it, both in philosophy and religion, are just as strong, as cogent, and as certain, as those for free-will. The High Church party has put aside these considerations as metaphysical; and it has suffered for its neglect of an important department of thought, in a theology confined and exclusive on an important subject. It has maintained a narrow and superficial doctrine of free-will, not deepened by the perception of difficulties, or enlarged by sympathy with opposite truth.

Thus over-biassed, then, and too inaccessible to the reasons and arguments for predestinarianism, these persons naturally imagined that the position of the Church Catholic, on this point, was as exclusive as their own. They were not aware, consequently, that the Church Catholic had, with a wisdom superior to that of religious parties, tolerated even rigid predestinarianism, and allowed it a recognised and even honourable place as a school, within her comprehensive system. They did not apparently know that a Father whose name they specially revered, and to whose authority they were constantly appealing, had devoted his principal energies, religious and intellectual alike, to the disproof of the notion that God gave all Christians sufficient grace to attain salvation; and to the establishment of the contrary position that God gave only this amount of grace to a certain number of souls, whom He had from all eternity chosen to be the recipients of it. Thus, unacquainted with the line of the Church Catholic, and with the language of their own favourite Father on this subject, they assumed, as necessary to be believed, that which the Church has always allowed to be contradicted, and that which St. Augustine did contradict. They assumed it, as if proof were unnecessary, and the matter were one of common

and universal consent; not stating, but only *implying* and *supposing* it, in their doctrine relating to baptism. They maintained that it was necessary to believe that baptism was the *instrument* by which God conveyed the grace in question to all Christians—the obligation to hold the universal conveyance of this grace, in some way or other, being taken for granted; as if that were quite certain, and the only question could be as to the obligation to hold its conveyance by a particular channel.

2. But if even it were necessary to believe that a grace enabling men to attain salvation was universally given in baptism, it was a mistake to call this grace regeneration; and as the first was a mistake of substantial theology, this second was a mistake of terminology.

And here I cannot but express some surprise at the mode in which the contest to which I refer was conducted on this head. It would indeed be difficult to believe, were not the facts of the case before us, that a long dispute should have been maintained respecting regeneration; that the question should have been argued in official conferences, in pamphlets, in judicial courts, and that from first to last no reference should have been made to what regeneration was, and what was meant by the word. Regeneration was maintained on one side to be literally given in baptism, on the other to be presumptively given; but what that was which was literally given according to one side, and presumptively given according to the other, it never occurred to either, from the beginning of the dispute to the end, either to explain or inquire. Both sides kept within the familiar precincts of a *word*, apparently afraid to leave it for the unexplored regions of sense, and thinking it safer to stay within their walls, and look out from the convenient inclosure, than venture at all outside. And yet suppose the same line pursued in a parallel

case, and what could be more obviously unreasonable? Our formularies assert *election* as well as regeneration of all the baptized; and the question of literal or hypothetical may be raised in the case of the assertion of election, just as it is in the case of the assertion of regeneration. Suppose, then, that instead of the question being whether all were regenerate in baptism, the question were whether all were elect in baptism; that one side said, this assertion must be understood hypothetically, while the other said no, it must be taken literally; that first a Bishop and a private clergyman argued together for eight days on this question, and elicited from one another respectively one hundred and forty-nine questions and answers; that, no agreement being arrived at, the case was sent to the Arches Court, where it had the benefit of being formally argued by counsel for several days; that from the Arches Court it went to the Privy Council, where it had the same benefit for the same length of time; that then it was decided by the judges appointed by law; but that from the beginning to the end, and through all the successive stages of this argument about election, not one person concerned in it, on either side, ever thought of asking what election meant. Would not this be considered a somewhat strange omission? And would not the omission be as unfortunate as it was strange? For is it not a golden rule that, in any dispute about the application of a word, we should first find out the meaning of the word? Is it disputed, then, whether the application of the word elect to all the baptized is literal or hypothetical, ask, first of all, what is the meaning of elect? and you may find yourself saved much trouble in the end. For does elect mean elect to eternal life, or elect to privileges and means of grace? If it means (as in the New Testament it does) the former, then all the baptized are evidently not elect really, and therefore can only be called elect hypothetically.

But an omission which is thus obviously unreasonable in the supposed dispute as to the application of the term elect, was no less so in the actual dispute as to the application of the term regenerate. The golden rule in this, as in the other case, was, first find out the meaning of the word. What *is* regeneration? What is the new nature? Is it a capacity for holiness, or is it holiness itself? If it is the latter, then all the baptized are evidently not regenerate in fact, and therefore can only be called regenerate by supposition.

Had this mode of conducting the dispute then been adopted, and had the meaning of the word regenerate been made a definite subject of inquiry, much trouble might have been saved. Scripture is so very plain on this subject, that I cannot but think that serious and definite inquiry must have elicited and brought home the fact that regenerate involves, in its Scriptural meaning, actual holiness; and this being ascertained, the question as to the application of the word was settled. But such a course was not adopted. Each side had its own meaning, indeed, in the term; but the meaning was silently assumed, and not stated or brought into discussion. And so one side defended its meaning of the term under the assertion of a literal, the other under the assertion of an hypothetical, application of it; but both sides defended their respective meanings obliquely and indirectly instead of openly, and by the mode of tacit assumption instead of that of explanation and proof. Thus two meanings of the term fought, but they fought to no purpose, because they fought blindfold and in the dark: they were not made to confront each other, so as to have their strength examined, and their respective grounds and evidences compared and weighed.

Thus much for a contest which originated in an inadequate acquaintance first with the principles of theology, and next

with its terms, in one important department; which was conducted on each side without any reference to the meaning of the word upon which it hinged, and of which the only correct and satisfactory part was the ultimate decision. I will add two observations.

1. There have been differences of opinion in the English Church ever since the Reformation, on the question of baptismal regeneration,—the High Church party taking one side, and the Calvinistic another; but, up to the Gorham contest, those differences were never considered to affect a man's position in the Church, and the subject was regarded as neutral ground, on which a latitude of opinion was allowed. The Gorham contest was the very first attempt to interfere with this latitude, and to make a particular opinion on this subject obligatory. The Gorham contest, then, was a *new move* in the English Church; in commencing it, the High Church party took a new ground, unknown to their predecessors in the Church, unknown to men whose names are in everybody's mouth as standards of orthodoxy. I look in vain into the writings of Hooker, Laud, Jeremy Taylor, Pearson, and others of that school for any sign that they considered the hypothetical interpretation of the statements regarding the baptized in our formularies as a bar to a clergyman officiating in the Church. Thus, whether Hooker, in the much quoted passage[1], adopts this interpretation or not, he evidently

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[1] "We speak of infants as the rule of piety alloweth both to speak and think. They that take to themselves in ordinary talk a charitable kind of liberty to name men of their own sort God's dear children (notwithstanding the large reign of hypocrisy) should not, methinks, be so strict and rigorous against the Church *for presuming as it doth* of a Christian innocent. For when we know how Christ in general hath said that of such is the kingdom of heaven, which kingdom is the inheritance of God's elect, and do withal behold how His providence hath called them into the first beginnings of eternal life, and presented them at the wellspring of new-birth, wherein original sin is purged; besides which sin there is no hindrance of their salvation known to us, as themselves will grant; hard were it that, having so many fair inducements whereupon to ground, we should not be thought to utter at the least a

alludes to it as an allowable one, and one which a minister in the Church may hold. "We speak of infants," he says, "as the rule of piety alloweth both to speak and think." What is the rule of piety to which he refers? He proceeds to give an instance of it immediately in the "charitable liberty" which some people use of *calling* men God's dear children, though they do not know whether they really are so or not. And he concludes: "Hard were it that we should not be thought to utter at the least a truth as *probable and allowable* in terming any such particular infant an elect babe, as in *presuming* the like of others, whose safety nevertheless we are not absolutely able to warrant." The natural construction of this passage, I think, would be, that Hooker adopted himself, as the ground of calling a baptized child "elect" (and the use of the term "regenerate" stands on the same ground as that of "elect"), "the rule of piety;" which rule he identifies with that of charitable presumption. But I shall be reminded of other passages in Hooker which take another ground. Well, then, I will not quote him as an authority for this mode of interpretation, but I may safely say that he does not disallow it. For even if he is using an *argumentum ad hominem*, and only appealing to the "charitable liberty" used by his opponents, as a ground which *they* will admit in the question, he evidently does not, in appealing to this ground, at all censure it.

So Pearson explains the application of the term "saint" in the Epistles to all the baptized upon the rule of "charitable presumption." "When the means are used, without something appearing to the contrary, we ought to *presume* of the good effect." And he afterwards identifies *saint* with *regenerate.*

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truth *as probable and allowable* in terming any such particular infant an elect babe, *as in presuming* the like of others, whose safety nevertheless we are not absolutely able to warrant." — Keble's Ed. vol. ii. p. 398.

"Those are truly and properly saints which are sanctified in Christ Jesus, first in respect of their holy faith, by which they are regenerated."[1] Shall I be told that Pearson in another passage takes another ground on the subject of baptismal regeneration? What is the conclusion? Why, simply that Pearson is no authority for either mode of interpretation. The truth is our divines are not very consistent in their language on this subject. But they certainly do not *condemn* the hypothetical ground. Their mode of alluding to it is respectful, as if, whatever ground they might choose for themselves, they did not censure it as taken by another.

Thus Dr. Samuel Ward has a correspondence with Bishop Bedell on the subject of the regeneration of infants in baptism[2]: Bishop Bedell taking the line that baptism is only "an obsignatory sign," Dr. Ward that it is more. But the two correspondents do not hint that either opinion unfits the holder for ministry in the Church. They argue as Christian brethren might argue on an important but still open question. Thus at the Savoy Conference the Nonconformists object that "throughout the several offices the phrase is such as *presumes* all persons (within the communion of the Church) to be regenerated"—a presumption, they say, which is beyond "the utmost latitude of charity." And how do the Bishops answer? By denying that the term regenerate is used presumptively? No; but by defending the presumptive use of it. "The Church in her prayers useth no more offensive phrase than St. Paul uses when he writes to the Corinthians, Galatians, and others, calling them in general the Churches of God, sanctified in Christ Jesus, by vocation saints, amongst whom, notwithstanding, there were many who by their known sins were not properly such."[3]

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[1] Oxford Ed. vol. i. p. 416.
[2] Parr's Life of Usher, pp. 438—446.
[3] Cardwell's Conferences, pp. 308. 342.

Do the bishops elsewhere take another ground? I repeat what I have just said. The language of our divines may not be consistent. All that I maintain is, that it is comprehensive, including the presumptive ground as an allowable one. Thus, lastly, Mr. Davison writes an article in the "Quarterly Review" to prove "that infant baptism is regarded by our Church as conferring spiritual regeneration simply, and without reserve." But does Mr. Davison wish to exclude from the Church those who do not hold this position? No; he speaks of them with respect as "eminent divines," and "excellent men," from whom he differs in opinion, but whom he still regards as brethren in the Church and in the ministry.[1] I conclude, then, that the Gorham contest was a new move in the Church — an attempt to shut up what had hitherto been open, to make obligatory what had been allowed to be contradicted, and to convert an opinion into an article of faith; and that, as such, the move was untenable; for it would, indeed, be unreasonable to say at this time of day that the doctrines of the English Church were not settled, but in course of development. What has not been an obligatory doctrine for three centuries ought not to be one now.

2. I cannot but express my opinion that had the very work, which most contributed to form the general feeling which brought on the Gorham contest, been read with due accuracy of thought, and a sufficient exertion of reason in the reading of it, this whole contest, with all the trouble and excitement, might have been saved. Dr. Pusey's tract on baptism made a deep and permanent impression by its faithful representation of the baptismal or regenerate state, as described by the Fathers. But so far from the representation

[1] Davison's Remains, p. 289. 325.

of the baptismal or regenerate state, given in this tract, being at all at variance with the Gorham judgment, it appears to me strongly to support and confirm,—I might almost say, *anticipate* it.

The regenerate or baptismal state is described in this tract in the words of St. Chrysostom, as "righteousness, sanctification, adoption, unnumbered blessings[1]," "being not only free but holy, not holy only, but righteous, not righteous only but sons, not sons only but heirs, not heirs only but brethren of Christ[2];" as "the putting on of Christ the Son of God, the being transformed into His likeness, the being brought into one kindred and species with Him[3]; being incorporate with Christ, being made flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone[4];" as "the same life which Christ had, the life which is above, which appears not, but is in heaven with Christ, health, salvation, renovation, the burden of sin laid aside, the old man with his evil actions thrown off, the new man with his good actions put on[5]"——in the language of Basil, as "conformation to the likeness of Christ's death, the abandonment of the former course of life, and the commencement of a second; the devil dethroned, God reconciled, salvation and life from the dead[6];"——in the language of Ambrose, as "dying to earth, and having nothing more to do with it, dying to sin and rising to God, burial with Christ and resurrection to life eternal, the whole outward man perishing, the old man nailed with Christ to His cross[7];" ——in the language of Tertullian, as "a separation of our members from unrighteousness and offence, and joining them to righteousness and holiness; a transference of them from the ways of sin to the gift of life eternal[8];"——in the lan-

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[1] P. 98.
[2] P. 21.
[3] P. 113.
[4] P. 197.
[5] P. 331.
[6] Pp. 99. 317.
[7] Pp. 100. 108 357.
[8] P. 105.

guage of Hermas, as "the laying aside the deathliness of the former life, being freed from the doom of death and made over to life, discharged from the bond of death and assigned to life[1];"——in the language of Clement of Alexandria, as "sin washed away, the man no longer evil, the soul enlightened, the character changed[2];"——in the language of Jerome, as "the robe of royalty, the garment of princes, the putting on of the new man from heaven, the being clothed with mercy for cruelty, with patience for impatience, with righteousness for iniquity, with virtues for vices, with Christ for Anti-Christ[3];"——in the language of Hilary, as "a return to innocence, to immortality, to the knowledge of God, to the faith of hope[4];"——in the language of Gregory Nazianzen, as "the health of the soul, the garment of immortality[5];"——in the language of Gregory Nyssen, as "intimacy with sin abandoned, conformation to Christ's death, death to sin, such death consisting in not loving the flesh, not desiring riches, not lying, stealing, reviling, but being as a dead man[6];"——in the language of Cyprian, as "being dead and buried to the carnal sins of the old man, and bearing the image of Him who is in heaven[7];"——in the language of Origen, as "the spiritual circumcision of the mind, fleshly pollution cut off, the heart cleansed, the soul purified from all defilement[8];"——in the language of Hippolytus, as "the evil one renounced, the enemy of souls denied, Christ confessed, slavery put off, adoption put on, and a gleaming with the rays of righteousness as with the brightness of the sun[9];"——in the language of St. Cyril of Alexandria, as "the change from unbelief to belief, from ignorance to knowledge, from the things of the flesh to the life holy and pure,

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[1] P. 138.
[2] P. 210.
[3] P. 111.
[4] P. 118.
[5] P. 120.
[6] P. 121.
[7] P. 177.
[8] P. 327.
[9] P. 376.

from the things of the world to the love of the things above the world[1];"——in the language of Gregory Nyssen again, as "being unclothed of the slavish flesh, unclothed of our sins, unclothed of the filthy garment, and clothed with the pure one, unclothed of the beggarly and many-shredded garment, and clothed with the sacred and most beautiful one[2];"——in the language of Jerome again, as "being clothed with the white, as Christ was with the filthy garment,—with the garment of righteousness as Christ was with the garment of sin[3];"——in the language of Hilary again, as "the circumcision of Christ, being reborn unto the new man, dying unto the old, being quickened, burial with Christ and return to eternity, death to sin and birth to immortality[4];"——in the language of Tertullian, Justin, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, the Gregories, Jerome, Theodoret, as "pardon, the enjoyment of the inheritance, the glory which is on high, the stripping off of the defiled garment of sin, the sprinkling of the conscience, the cleansing and purification of the soul, the destruction of the devil, sin dead powerless and drowned like Pharaoh in the Red Sea, countless vices which dwelt in us destroyed, spiritual circumcision, circumcision from error and wickedness, the old man with his carnal life, desires, concupiscence put off, the defilement of our soul melted away, the very approach of sin cut off, the spots of sin effaced, the stain of disobedience cleansed, the cleansing with the invisible hyssop, the righteous mind restored, reformation from evil, spiritual reformation, restoration of original righteousness, the return of the original formation, the stony heart removed for the heart of flesh, a new heart and new spirit imparted, the drinking in of immortality, the overflowing of spiritual graces as of tor-

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[1] P. 376. [2] P. 385. [3] P. 384. [4] P. 132.

rents and rivers in the wilderness";——in the language of the liturgies, as "the blotting out of all stains of sin, purification from the defilement of the old man, nature restored to its first estate, the new infancy of a real innocence, transformation, the putting off of the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and putting on of the new man which is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the incorrupt and spotless clothing, the garment of redemption, the robe of glory, the loosing of bonds, the enlightenment of souls, the purification of flesh and spirit, the clothing of immortality, being a clean vessel, a child of light, an heir of the kingdom, being marked unto life, written among the children of grace, being marked with the mark which shall not be effaced, sealed to life everlasting."[1]

Now I would ask any man of plain common sense how he would naturally interpret this language, as applied to all the baptized, and in what way he would naturally understand these high characteristics to be asserted of all the baptized. Would not such a person say at once, "this language *must* be hypothetical. It is evidently not true, as a matter of fact, that all the baptized are holy and righteous, are transformed into the likeness of Christ, have put off the old man with his sins, have laid aside the deathliness of the former life, have nailed the old man with Christ to the cross, have put on the new man from heaven, have their stony heart removed and in its place the heart of flesh, have a new heart and a new spirit. These expressions are plainly then inapplicable *literally* to all the baptized, and *can* therefore only be applied hypothetically. All this is a high presumption, made according to an usage of common and recognised place

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[1] Pp. 108. 120. 127. 185. 316. 318. 322. 325. 336. 341, 342. 210. 346. 349. 351. 374. 382. 389. 36, 37, 38. 58. 141. 143. 144. 147.

in human language—an usage with which we are all of us familiar in society and in books."

Nor in drawing this conclusion from Dr. Pusey's tract, am I opposing any interpretation which the writer himself gives. For the writer puts no interpretation upon this language at all, but only cites it. He has ably and faithfully fulfilled the task of collecting and putting before the reader the language of the Fathers respecting baptism; but having supplied him with the material he abstains from interfering with his judgment upon it, and leaves him to explain and interpret for himself. Well, then, as I am left to myself, I give an explanation to this language, and I give it the only explanation which I think the rule of common sense admits of.

But I will state the case with respect to this language more fully. I can imagine then, in the first place, a person saying that this whole body of patristic language respecting the regeneration of the baptized, did not admit of any satisfactory explanation at all. I can suppose a person saying, "Here are a set of writers who have one main general intention, that of magnifying and instilling a deep respect for the sacrament of baptism; but beyond that, their language is not clear what it means and what it does not mean; they do not appear themselves to analyze their own ideas in the use of it, or consequently to know what their own meaning is, or consequently to have any definite meaning at all. Moreover, these writers follow and copy one another, and that tends to increase such indefiniteness, because each writer in succession takes for granted some meaning or other accompanying the language as it is handed down to him, upon which he relies, to his own discharge from responsibility in the matter, and relief from all call to clear up his own mind, and ascertain his own meaning. By a definite meaning, the

critic would proceed, I do not mean anything mathematically precise, for I am not so unreasonable as to require that, but simple *one* meaning, as distinguished from *two* opposite and inconsistent meanings. These writers certainly describe regeneration as involving actual holiness and goodness; the phrases they use are such as would naturally be considered to mean this, and to attach any other meaning to them would be simply to explain them away. On the other hand, these writers appear to maintain that this regeneration is conferred actually and truly upon all the baptized; and the dignity, power, and efficacy of baptism are exalted on that ground. On this side of their language, then, they say regeneration is only a capacity; for what all the baptized possess cannot possibly, in consistency with facts, be more. These writers, then, have two meanings. Regeneration is contemplated as actual holiness, when the greatness of the baptismal gift is the point; it is contemplated as a capacity only, when the efficacy of baptism in conferring it is the point. They regard, that is, regeneration, as *involving* actual holiness, and at the same time as *not* involving it; as being *more* than a capacity, and at the same time being *only* a capacity. That is to say, their whole doctrine of baptism is from beginning to end a contradiction, without consistency and without congruity; a confusion of ideas, and a chaos of language. And as is usual in such cases, the confusion is worse, from the total unconsciousness on the part of the writers of it. The more unsound the basis, the bolder is the superstructure; and the edifice of phraseology enlarges in proportion to the depth of the contradiction over which it is built. Their want of meaning thus becomes as little clear, at first sight, as their meaning; it is hid and disguised by exuberance of words, and can only be extracted by thought and attention. And thus according as a man's idea of meaning stays at words or

goes beyond them, this language is full of meaning to one man and has none at all to another.

I can imagine this account given of the patristic language on this subject. And if this account is true, all that can be said is that this language must be dismissed altogether, as being of any importance or any weight on this question. For language which has two opposite meanings has no meaning, and language which has no meaning has no authority. In that case, the patristic language on the subject of baptismal regeneration ceases to be a ground on which any doctrine of any kind on that subject can be raised. And in forming our judgment on this question, we must put the whole of it aside, as so much inextricable confusion and useless lumber, clogging the question instead of clearing it, and intercepting explanation instead of aiding it.

But such an account of the patristic language on this subject is, I think, untrue; for occasional departures from the Scriptural type do not amount to superseding it, and occasional inconsistencies do not vitiate a whole language. I would claim, then, that this language should be regarded as not having two contradictory meanings, but one meaning, — that is to say, as being consistent and rational language. I would insist on that *rationale* of it which is the favourable one to patristic authority, and which all admirers of the Fathers will adopt. But if this language has but one meaning, the question immediately arises, What *is* that meaning? The choice lies between one or other of two meanings *singly* and *solely*, for we cannot choose both. Does all this language, then, which I have just quoted from Dr. Pusey's tract, mean that regeneration *is* actual holiness, or does it *not* mean this? It appears to me to mean this. That is the natural construction of the words, and what any plain person would put upon them. And as for the application of them to all the

baptized, that is made upon the common and recognised rule of charitable presumption. There is nothing unnatural, then, in my interpretation of this language. On the other hand, to say that by all this language is meant only a capacity, a faculty for holiness, a neutral and indeterminate thing, which good and bad may have alike, is a violation of the natural meaning of language, a distortion of the known sense of known words, and a defiance of common truth. If all this description means no more than this, the patristic phraseology ought, by common consent, to be ejected from the court and realm of language altogether as an imposture and a cheat; a departure from the design, and a falsification of the profession, of language.

In this more adjusted point of view then, again, Dr. Pusey's tract on Baptism is a confirmation of the Gorham judgment. For the writer of this tract would certainly reject the idea of the patristic language having two contradictory meanings, and assert it only to have one consistent meaning. But if it has only one meaning, it is clear, from what I have said, what that meaning is; clear in what sense the Fathers understood the term regeneration, and consequently in what mode they applied it to all the baptized.

Again: it is obvious that this tract considers the language of the Fathers, in regard to baptism, as only an amplification and expansion of that of Scripture; and Scripture passages are from time to time brought forward, and the patristic doctrine is shown to be only a carrying out of them. Now, then, what is the Scriptural assertion respecting all the baptized, that they are saints, risen with Christ, dead to sin,—in a word, regenerate? Literal or hypothetical? Plainly the latter. This tract, then, in representing the patristic language as only an amplification of that of Scripture, at once lifts up to that language the key of hypothetical interpre-

tation,—the key of which the Committee of Privy Council, by their judgment in the Gorham case, *permitted* the use, for the interpretation of the same language in the baptismal service.

And now I will conclude with only asking the opponents of the Gorham judgment these questions. And, I would remind them, I do not say that Scripture does not contain other language counter to that to which these questions apply. I only ask them whether Scripture does not, without or with *other* language, contain *that* language.

Are they prepared to deny then,—

1. That Scripture contains the doctrine that God has from all eternity predestinated certain persons to eternal life, and, as a consequence of this, to the qualifications for that life, *i. e.* to holiness, to righteousness, and to be conformed to the image of His Son?

2. That Scripture consequently represents in one department of its language, holiness, righteousness, and the conformation of the human character to the image of Christ, as a Divine gift and a Divine creation; a disposition of the soul gained not by man's own strength, but imparted by Divine grace solely?

3. That Scripture employs a certain class of terms, in accordance with and upon the basis of this doctrine, such as "elect," "predestinate," "new creature,"—terms involving actual holiness and goodness either present or in the long run, in those to whom they are applied; elect and predestinate by implication, the eternal life to which they express destination implying such qualifications for it; new creature expressly?

4. That the term *regenerate* is one of, and belongs to, this class of Scripture terms; this term involving, in its Scriptural sense, actual holiness and goodness, while, by the force of the

term itself, it represents such holiness and goodness as a Divine gift and creation simply; inasmuch as no man can give birth to himself, either a first birth or a second one.

Are the opponents of the Gorham judgment prepared to disown this as a department of Scripture doctrine and language? If they are, I can only express my conviction that they are engaged in a hopeless contest with the natural sense of Scripture. If they are not, they have no ground for dissenting from the Gorham judgment, and should no longer protest against it.

I do not wish to be understood, however, as throwing out a challenge, or inviting controversy on this subject. All I mean to say is, that I think this question should be reconsidered; and that I cannot but believe that, in proportion as it is reconsidered, some of those gifted and religious minds, whose disinterested zeal to defend what they thought the plain meaning of our formularies, engaged them in the Gorham contest, will see cause for receding from the ground which they took on that occasion.

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THE

PRIMITIVE DOCTRINE

OF

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRIMITIVE SENSE OF THE TERM REGENERATION AS ASCERTAINED FROM THE SCRIPTURAL AND PATRISTIC USE OF IT.

THE primitive doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration depends on two points, first, the sense of the term regeneration, and, secondly, the mode in which such regeneration is connected with baptism. I shall devote the present and the following chapter to the task of ascertaining the former point. And, first, I shall endeavour to ascertain the sense of the term, from its use in Scripture, and the writings of the Fathers.

It must be observed, then, to begin with, that the alternative with respect to regeneration lies between two senses, that of actual goodness, and that of a grace enabling to be good. By some regeneration is regarded as a new state of spiritual power or capacity, and no more; and, so understood, it does not include actual goodness and holiness in its meaning at all, but is a state which the most wicked as well as the best of men may be in alike. We see men in common life endowed by nature with greater powers of mind than others, with finer affections, with a quicker sense, with deeper tastes, and with a whole temperament which would have enabled them, had they chosen to direct it to such an

end, to have attained a higher goodness than the average of men can attain to, but who, in the absence of such a moral use of their gifts, are by no means better than ordinary men, but very often worse, and sometimes, indeed, the worst of men. In the same way the possession of the highest spiritual powers and capacities is wholly distinct from spirituality in fact, and in forming our idea of the state of regeneration in this sense, we must wholly put the idea of actual goodness aside; for in whatever language we may exalt this state, and however incomprehensible we may assert it to be, and whatever gifts and powers we may include in it, and however mysterious and sublime we may suppose these to be, — it is plain that, so long as we regard regeneration as a state of spiritual capacity simply, or contemplate the gifts and powers contained in it, as depending for their fruit upon a contingent will, regeneration does not imply any actual goodness. The height, or extent, or mysteriousness of the spiritual capacity does not make it differ in the least from the commonest moral one in this respect, that the possession of it is no pledge for the use of it, and is therefore consistent with the greatest actual wickedness in the possessor. Regeneration is in this sense no more than a neutral and indeterminate state common to good and bad alike.

By others, again, regeneration is regarded as a state, not of capacity only for goodness and holiness, but of goodness and holiness itself. An examination of the Scriptural and Patristic use of the term will, I think, decide the question in favour of this latter signification; and the inquiry in the present chapter will turn upon the four following heads: —

I. Regeneration implies in the primitive sense real and actual goodness, in distinction to a capacity for it.

II. Regeneration implies final goodness, as distinguished from goodness for the time being.

III. Regeneration is an imparted as distinguished from an acquired goodness.

IV. Regeneration is not the less real and actual goodness because it is imparted.

I. & II. The two first heads are, with respect to the grounds and proof of them, so intimately connected and mixed together, that I shall treat them as one, and shall endeavour to show under one head that regeneration is, in the primitive sense, actual goodness, and that goodness a final and perfect one. But I will make two preliminary observations:—

1. The question what any particular word means in its primitive use must of course be decided by a reference to that use. It will not, however, be wholly irrelevant to observe that the term *born again*, as applied to the moral creature, appears of itself to suggest a somewhat higher meaning than that of being merely endowed with certain new capacities, moral or spiritual. Whatever be the exact meaning of a man's being born again, the expression certainly appears to stand for the greatest change that can take place in the condition of the moral creature: for can we imagine any greater change than a new existence? But the circumstance of being endowed with additional capacities and means for a good life is so far from being in itself the greatest change that can take place in the moral being, that in the case of a vast portion of those who have these advantages bestowed on them, no change results whatever, the individual remaining just the same in spite of them. A change in our capacities and resources is a change in our circumstances rather than in ourselves; but to be born again certainly suggests at first sight the meaning of a change in *ourselves*, being different men to what we were before, being new creatures; and, a change of personal identity being a contradiction, a change of moral character appears to be pointed at as the greatest personal change that there can be. And here I cannot but notice that the use of the expression new *nature*, in the place of the Scriptural one of new *birth*, tends to suppress or disguise this natural conclusion. There can be no harm in varying a word, provided the original

meaning still continues in the mind of the person using it. But the term nature suggests a somewhat different meaning from that which birth does; nature, in our common use of the word, referring more to the man's powers and endowments, and birth referring to the man himself. The term new "nature," then, does not carry upon it, at first sight, so much of the meaning of a personal change as the term new "birth" does.

2. Again, I will caution the reader against a particular use which is sometimes made of the term birth, in the phrase "born again," which will lead him in a wrong direction as to the meaning of this phrase. Birth is sometimes regarded in this phrase, as if it were used in tacit distinction to subsequent growth; and the distinction between birth and growth thus assumed is turned into a distinction between the faculty and the state of goodness; the birth, as the beginning, standing for the *faculty*, and the subsequent growth and life, to which it is supposed to be contrasted, for the *state* of goodness. The result of this distinction is, that regeneration or the new birth is regarded as a capacity for holiness, instead of holiness itself. But, first, were this distinction between birth and subsequent growth and maturity intended in the phrase, it would not be the same distinction as that of the faculty and the state, but a very different one. For growth follows inevitably upon birth, the proper circumstances permitting: the plant grows to be a tree, the child to be a man, necessarily; but the state of goodness does not at all necessarily follow upon the faculty. But the distinction is, to begin with, untrue, and is not designed in the phrase. In the phrase "born of God," and "born again," though birth is commencing life, the stress is laid evidently not on the commencement but on the life; it is a new life which is contrasted with an old one, not one part of the new life which is contrasted with another part. The stress is not upon the birth, but upon the peculiar kind of birth, — that it is a second one, and a Divine one.

Nor, indeed, is "born" or "birth" the word always used in this class of expressions, "*son* of God" being used as often, and the term "son" being plainly independent of any distinction of this kind.

The new birth is expressed in Scripture in two ways, as the being born *of God*, and the being born *again*. And under both these forms of expression it will be found to signify a real virtue and holiness, and not the mere power or capacity of becoming good and holy.

1. In the Scriptural phrase "being born of," or "being a son of," the relation of sonship to any one is contemplated as involving an inheritance of his moral character. By a law of the physical world the offspring succeeds at its birth to the nature of the parent; each fresh generation is only the reproduction of an original type, and the whole succession of individuals is united in the identity of a race. Sonship, then, is a pledge for a likeness of nature in one being to another. The moral character, however, of the creature is not part of his nature, but is the result of a contingent will; and, therefore, there is no pledge in human sonship for a similarity of moral character. In Scriptural language, however, this law of transmission is transferred from the one subject matter to the other; sonship is contemplated as involving an inheritance of the moral character of the father; and the phrase "being born of" or "being a son of" any one, stands to express a person's being morally like that other personage from whom he is thus said to be born. Thus our Lord tells the Jews that if they were the children of Abraham, they would do the works of Abraham; but that as they do the works of the devil, they are the children of the devil.[1]

Upon the common ground of sonship, then, to be a son of God means, in Scripture, to be good, because God is

[1] John viii. 39.

good; and, therefore, upon the general rule that the son inherits the moral character of the father, the sons of God are good. Thus our Lord says to the Jews, "If God were your Father ye would love me[1];" and He adds, "He that is of God (or a son of God) heareth God's words,"—*i.e.* hears them with an obedient and earnest mind, so as to practise them. Thus the merciful who imitate the forbearance of God "in making His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sending rain on the unjust and on the just," are said to be "the children of their Father which is in heaven."[2] Thus, the peacemakers are called the children of God, their work being eminently a holy and Divine work.[3] St. Paul says, that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God,"—*i.e.* follow the direction of the Spirit—"are the sons of God[4];" that men "are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus[5],"—*i.e.* by a life of faith and holiness; and he speaks of the glorious liberty of the children of God[6],—*i.e.* their freedom from sin; and of the "blameless and harmless" who are the "sons of God."[7] In these texts the test of sonship and birth of God is obviously actual holiness of life. Accordingly in the text "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," "regeneration" and the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" are put together as if they were the same thing; such renewing evidently meaning a renovation of the heart in fact, not a mere power given of attaining such renovation. And St. Peter speaks of the effects of the new birth, as being "a lively hope, and an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," thus identifying the new birth with an actual state of goodness and holiness, together with all its hopes and prospects. On the other hand, a mere power of leading a holy life is never called in Scripture a new birth, nor are men ever supposed to be the sons of God because they simply have the capacity for attaining a high

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[1] John viii. 42.
[2] Matt. v. 45.
[3] Matt. v. 9.
[4] Rom. viii. 14.
[5] Gal. iii. 26.
[6] Rom. viii. 21.
[7] Phil. ii. 15.

and spiritual character. If it were so, it is obvious that our Lord's whole argument with the Jews would fall to the ground. The Jews that persecuted, calumniated, and killed our Lord, would be just as much the sons of God as those who believed in Him and became His disciples. And, in the same way, those that were not led by the Spirit of God would be just as truly the sons of God as those who were; and those who had not faith would as really be the children of God as those who had.

But, in the next place, to be a son of God means, in Scripture, not only to be good, but to be necessarily and finally good. That which belongs to sonship in general only metaphorically, belongs legitimately to sonship of God; for God is good by nature; and therefore a son of God, in inheriting the nature, inherits properly and really the goodness of his Father. And this involves a peculiarity in the goodness itself which is inherited; for if God is good by nature, or necessarily, that goodness which a son of God inherits from his Father is a perfect and necessary goodness. Accordingly St. John describes sonship, or being born of God, as involving a perfect and necessary goodness in the creature. Our Lord is, indeed, the only Son of God by nature; and therefore He is the only Son of God who derives naturally from the Father a necessary goodness. The creature, however, is represented in Scripture as receiving, by a wonderful act of Divine condescension and mercy, a sonship of adoption analogous to the natural sonship of the true and only Son; and this sonship of adoption includes a perfect and necessary goodness upon the basis of adoption, as the natural sonship includes it upon the basis of nature. St. John says, "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of God[1];" "Every one that loveth is born of God[2];" "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God[3];" "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh

[1] 1 John ii. 29. [2] 1 John iv. 7. [3] 1 John v. 1.

the world[1];" "In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God[2],"—*i.e.* is not a child of God. There could hardly be plainer language to show the general sense in which the expressions "child of God" and "born of God" are used in Scripture,—viz. that they are used in the sense of real goodness and holiness, and not of a mere improved or enlarged power of becoming good and holy. Regeneration, or the new birth, is here plainly spoken of as identical with the practical reign of faith and love in the soul; such a dominion of spiritual motives and principles as quite supplants the influence of the world in man's heart, ejects its lusts and appetites, and thus overcomes and triumphs over it. But the Apostle further proceeds to describe this actual goodness and holiness as also necessary and perfect; it being impossible that a son of God should sin, because a son inherits the nature of the father; and the nature of God is necessarily holy and good. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he *cannot sin because he is born of God.*"[3] "Whosoever is born of God *sinneth not;* but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."[4] To be born of God, then, or to be regenerate, means in Scripture to be perfectly and necessarily good; it is as being "partakers of the Divine nature[5]" by adoption, to share, by virtue of such adoption, the Divine immutable goodness. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit."[6] That is to say, that which is born of the Divine Spirit is itself Divine, by reason of its birth, which communicates to that which is begotten the nature of that which begets. Thus the Fathers speak of the Christian as being "made a God," and receiving a "perfect Deity" in baptism; evidently on the ground that regeneration, which

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[1] 1 John v. 4.
[2] 1 John iii. 10.
[3] 1 John iii. 9.
[4] 1 John v. 18.
[5] 1 Peter i. 4.
[6] John iii. 6.

takes place in baptism, is a birth from God, and that the offspring has a common nature with the parent.

2. The new birth is spoken of in Scripture as regeneration, or being born *again;* and under this form of expression it equally signifies actual holiness and virtue, as distinguished from any mere power of becoming good and holy.

A second state of existence has an obvious reference to a first one, and its nature and quality will be seen from the nature and quality of that first state with which it is contrasted; for whatever the first state was, it is plain that the second is the opposite of it. Now, the first or the natural life, and that which the old man lives, is evidently not described in Scripture as a condition of mere capacity for sin, but as a state of real and existing sin; it is not a state of free will which is only determinable to evil, but it is an evil and a sinful state. The second life, therefore, into which the new birth admits us, is not a state of mere capacity for goodness, but a state of real goodness. Again, the new birth implies the termination of the life which precedes it; but the life which preceded it was a life of sin; the new birth, therefore, implies the cessation of sin, and the cessation of sin is goodness; for no one who continues a moral agent at all can cease to sin without becoming good: the negative of sin implies the positive contrary of it.

This is another aspect, then, in which regeneration is put before us in Scripture, and especially in St. Paul's Epistles. A certain spiritual state is there described, into which all Christians are supposed to have been admitted, which is evidently the state of regeneration, and this is described as a *divine* life; those in it being spoken of as "sons of God," the "children of God," the "heirs of God," and as having "received the Spirit of adoption whereby they cry, Abba Father."[1] But what this state is principally described as being is a *second* life, succeeding a former or past one, those

[1] Rom. viii. 14, 15, 16, 17.

who are in it being said, first, to "have died with Christ [1]," and their "old man to have been crucified [2];" to "have been planted together in the likeness of His death [3]," and to "have been buried with Christ [4];" and, next, "to have been raised with Christ [5]," and "made to sit in heavenly places in Christ [6];" to be "alive from the dead," "alive unto God." [7] And this description also is evidently one of the regenerate state, for a new and second life is a state of regeneration. How, then, is the nature of this state described, and what are its tests and characteristics? Is it described as consisting in the possession only of new powers and faculties for a holy life, new opportunities, new means of grace? By no means; it is plainly described as a state, not of capacity only for holiness, but of holiness itself. For it is described as a state in which men "are dead to sin [8]," "freed from sin" by that death [9]; made "the servants of righteousness [10]," by that freedom from sin; "yielding their members as servants to righteousness unto holiness [11]," and "having their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." [12] Those who are in this state are said to "have been made free from the law of sin and death [13]," "to fulfil the righteousness of the law," to "be in the Spirit," to "walk in the Spirit," and to be "spiritually minded." [14] Their life is said to be "hid with Christ in God." [15] They are called "the children of light, and the children of the day." [16] They are said to be "quickened [17]," "reconciled [18]," "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." [19]

All this is described as a state not only in which Christians ought to be, and in which they have the power to be, but as the state in which they *are*. For it must be particularly

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[1] Rom. vi. 8.; Col. ii. 20., iii. 3.
[2] Rom. vi. 6.
[3] Rom. vi. 5.
[4] Rom. vi. 4.
[5] Col. iii. 1.
[6] Eph. ii. 6.
[7] Rom. vi. 11. 13.
[8] Rom. vi. 2. 8. 11.
[9] Rom. vi. 18.
[10] Rom. vi. 18.
[11] Rom. vi. 19.
[12] Rom. vi. 22.
[13] Rom. viii. 2.
[14] Rom. viii. 4. 9. 6.
[15] Col. iii. 3.
[16] 1 Thess. v. 5.
[17] Eph. ii. 5.
[18] Col. i. 21.
[19] Col. i. 13.

observed that it is said, "we that *are* dead to sin," or, as it would be better translated, "we that died to sin;" and in the same way, "*being* (or having been) made free from sin;" and so "ye *became* the servants of righteousness:" and so again, "*having* become the servants of God, ye *have* your fruit unto holiness." The Apostle throughout either asserts or refers to a fact. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, *hath* made me free from the law of sin and death;" "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us *who walk* after the Spirit." "Ye *are* not in the flesh, but in the Spirit;" the characteristic of "being in the Spirit" being "minding the things of the Spirit."[1]

Here then is a state described of actual goodness and holiness, and not only of a capacity, however improved a one, for such a life. To be dead to sin, and to be free from sin, can mean nothing else but to be without sin actually and really. There is a mode of understanding such expressions, indeed, adopted by some, according to which they signify the power of dying to and forsaking sin, or an assisting grace given for that purpose; but this is evidently not the meaning of the expressions which plainly stand not for the power but for the fact. Nor can any one, who comes to this language with an unbiassed mind, really suppose that a state which is described in that whole way in which this is, as that of being crucified in the old man, and risen with Christ; dead unto sin and alive unto God; freed from sin and become the servant of righteousness; being in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, and minding the things of the Spirit; that a life which is hid with Christ in God, a deliverance from darkness, and becoming a child of the light and of the day, is absolutely no more than the possession of new privileges, and new means of grace, capacitating for a good life. It is, as plainly as language can describe it, an actual state of goodness and

[1] Rom. viii. 5.

holiness; nor can we give any other interpretation except such as would be a forced and unnatural one.

But this conclusion will be made more clear by another consideration. It will be evident to any attentive reader of the Epistles of St. Paul, that the state in which he supposes Christians to be, and the state which he proposes to and inculcates upon them, as the state in which they ought to be, are, in fact, one and the same state. It is important to bear this consideration in mind, for otherwise we can never have a clear idea of the argument and succession of thought in these passages of St. Paul. We are apt to presume, to begin with, that the state in which a hortatory writer supposes those whom he addresses to be, and the state which he inculcates upon their choice, are different states; for we ask, if they are in this state already, what can be the use of urging it upon them? And upon this presumption we are much perplexed by the language of St. Paul, imagining these two states to be different ones, and yet unable to see how his language makes any difference between them. And the rapidity with which he changes from the one ground to the other, increases the difficulty. These passages in the Epistles are indeed a constant alternation of these two forms of assumption and exhortation; and they alternate so quickly sometimes that they run into and mix with one another. But when we understand that this presumption is incorrect, and that these two states are with St. Paul one and the same, we are relieved from the burden of having to find out a difference. We see that all these rapid alternations between assumption and exhortation are between the assumption of a state and exhortation to the same state; and that it is one and the same state which the Apostle means throughout.

A very slight examination of the passages we have just left will be enough to verify this observation upon St. Paul: "How shall we that are dead to sin," he says, "live any longer therein?"[1] Here is first an assumption, viz., that

[1] Rom. vi. 2.

those whom he addresses "are dead to sin;" and, secondly, an exhortation, that they must not "live any longer therein;" for the question, how *shall* they? is a covert exhortation, that they should not. But what is the difference between the state in which he here assumes them to be, and that in which he says they ought to be? None at all. To be dead to sin, and not to live in it, are the same thing; and therefore it is the same state which is supposed in the first place, and inculcated in the next. So again he says: "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But, God be thanked, ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."[1] Here is a certain state assumed, as that which Christians are in already, viz., one of servitude to righteousness. But the very same state is immediately made the subject of exhortation: "Even so now yield yourselves servants to righteousness unto holiness." So again he says to the Colossians, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above[2];" first assuming that they are in the world above, and then exhorting them to aspire thither. And a similar juxtaposition immediately follows: "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."[3] That Christians are dead to the world, and alive to God, is both assumed as their state already, and also inculcated as the state after which they ought to strive; and the fact is even made the reason for the duty. And so the Apostle tells the Thessalonians that they are the children of the light, and therefore ought not to sleep, but to watch[4]; which is first to say that they are, and next that they ought to be, watchful Christians; and tells

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[1] Rom. vi. 16, 17.
[2] Col. iii. 1.
[3] Col. iii. 2, 3.
[4] 1 Thess. v. 5.

the Ephesians, "Ye are light in the Lord; walk as children of light[1];" which is the same transition.

It may be laid down, then, that the state in which the Apostle assumes Christians to be, and that which he proposes to them, and inculcates upon their choice, is one and the same state. And this consideration has an important bearing upon the question before us. For the state which the Apostle inculcates upon Christians is of course a state of actual holiness; and therefore if the state in which he assumes them to be is the same with that which he inculcates upon them, the state in which he assumes them to be is also a state of actual holiness and goodness. But the state in which Christians are assumed to be is the regenerate state. The regenerate state, therefore, is a state of actual holiness and goodness.

It may be said, indeed, still, that whatever identity of language there may be in describing these two states, the fact of *exhortation* being used implies a difference between them; that what exhortation supposes is power and capacity, what it urges is life and conduct; and, therefore, that this is the difference between the state in which the Christian is assumed to be by St. Paul, and that which is inculcated upon him. But such an objection would not be a sound one. Exhortation undoubtedly supposes power and capacity in those to whom it is addressed; but it does not suppose that there is nothing more than this. Admonition is very suitably addressed to men actually good; though in that case it is not admonition to attain a new state, but to sustain an existing one. Nor does St. Paul, when he applies to Christians the warning conveyed in the fall of the Israelites in the wilderness, after their baptism in the cloud and in the sea, and reminds them of a like liability in their own case to a fall from the state into which they have been admitted, imply that that state is not one of actual goodness. Rather he

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[1] Eph. v. 8.

implies the very reverse. For his conclusion is, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" but this is not a reference to a mere power which may be neglected, but to an actual goodness which may be lost.[1]

But the goodness of the regenerate man, considered as being born of God, was shown to be a perfect and unchangeable goodness; and his goodness is the same, considered as being born again. For this is implied, in the first place, in the very notion of a new birth, or departure from one life and entrance into another. For death is not only departure from life, but final departure. A man dies once for all, when he dies: a death unto sin, then, is not only a separation from sin, but a final separation; and a final separation from sin is perfection. In the next place, a second or future life differs from the present one not only as being another life, but as being a life of another kind, — as being an eternal and fixed state of existence succeeding a temporary and changeable one. The goodness, therefore, of that second life has the constancy and fixedness of the life. Just as St. John therefore describes the man "born of God" as one who "cannot sin," so St. Paul describes the man "born again" as "dead to sin," "free from sin," and "become the slave of righteousness." That is, he describes him, as St. John does, as unable to sin. A man is a slave to any vice

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[1] The Fathers regard the deliverance of Israel from the power of Pharaoh, as typifying a real deliverance from the power as well as the guilt of sin, *i. e.* as present holiness; though they regard such a state as exposed to trial, and liable to forfeiture, as the type is designed to teach; and draw the proper lesson of the need of watchfulness. According to Basil, the deliverance from Pharaoh figures deliverance "from the tyranny of the devil," "reconciliation with God," and "life from the dead."— De Spiritu Sancto, c. 14. According to Gregory of Nyssa, the flight from Egypt typifies "flight from sin;" the passage of the Red Sea, the "being freed and saved by regeneration;" the drowning of the Egyptians, "the destruction of the devil." — De Bapt. Christi, tom. iii. p. 375. Hilary compares the destruction of the Egyptians to the "extinction of countless vices which dwelt in us."— In Ps. 134. § 19. According to Augustine, the passage of the Red Sea figures "freedom from the devil and his angels;" the deliverance from brick-making, deliverance "from the mire of the flesh;" the drowning of the Egyptians, "the extinction of worldly ambition, and innumerable sins." — Serm. 363. de Cant. Exod. See Dr. Pusey's Tract, p. 315.

when he takes such pleasure in it that he cannot help indulging it. To say, therefore, that a man is a slave to righteousness, is to say that he takes such pleasure in obeying the divine law, that he cannot help obeying it. It is to describe an entire change of inclination, so that the man is as much inclined to good as before he was to evil, and fulfils the divine law from pleasure and not from duty only. And if goodness is a pleasure to him, it has become natural to him and fixed in his character; for the only motive to sin is pleasure, and that motive is now removed.

And this attribute of the goodness of the regenerate state plainly appears in one of those forms of exhortation to which I have referred. Two distinct forms of exhortation are employed by St. Paul, one of which proceeds upon the *facts* of our present state, the other upon a *supposition.* When he bases his exhortation on the facts of our present state, he addresses Christians as in a state of spiritual trial, risk, and danger, as he does in that passage just referred to, in which he draws a warning from the fall of the children of Israel in the wilderness, after the passage of the Red Sea. But the most prominent form of exhortation which St. Paul employs is based on a supposition, — the supposition of a certain state into which Christians have been admitted. And when he employs this form of exhortation, he does not so much prohibit sin in Christians as wrong, as preclude and dismiss it as absurd, on the ground that it is a contradiction to that state; and that therefore, for the very reason they are in that state, they cannot commit it. "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" The Christian's state being assumed as a state of death or final separation from sin, the Apostle asks simply, how can he sin? He forbids him to do evil by telling him that he cannot do it. And the exhortation that follows is all put in this form. "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." That is to say, we should not serve sin because we cannot; because sin or the old

man is already crucified in us. And so again: "Know ye not to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?" The Apostle appeals to a ground of simple reason, that a man cannot disobey and obey at the same time; and that as the Christian is in a state of necessary obedience and servitude to God, he cannot do that which would involve disobedience to Him.

Now of this kind of exhortation I will remark, first, that, so far from supposing in those to whom it is addressed a state of power and capacity only, as distinguished from actual goodness, it supposes, by the very form of it, the direct contrary. For what contradiction would there be between the power of leading a holy life and not leading one? That sin is a contradiction to the state into which the Christian has entered, implies that that state is a holy life itself; for the contradiction to vice is virtue, — to an unholy life, a holy one. Nor, were the appeal made to the practical substance of this exhortation, as distinguished from the form, would it at all alter this conclusion with respect to the Christian's state as one of actual holiness. This exhortation is, in practical effect, an exhortation to Christians to substantiate and exhibit, in life and conversation, the state in which they profess and are assumed to be. If, then, they fail to do so, as the exhortation implies they may, the only conclusion is that they are not in that state in which they are assumed to be. But the state in which they are assumed to be is still one of actual goodness, and is not altered by not being verified.

But the conclusion to which I wish to draw attention *now*, and which I next draw from this form of exhortation, is that it implies not only actual, but final and indefectible goodness, in the Christian. For if the Christian is unable to sin, he is finally and indefectibly good.

Regeneration, then, is, in the Scriptural sense of the word, final goodness. And as such it is a wholly future or a present state of the Christian according to the sense in which final is understood. If final be understood literally, regeneration

does not belong to this life, for the actual final state is future. Regeneration, then, in the correct and literal sense, is a future and a heavenly state of goodness, after trial is passed and all alloy removed. It will only take place when we shall be made the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.[1] It is the adoption, the redemption which we wait for[2]; it is the "last regeneration[3]," which we shall not obtain till "the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory[4]," and "the restitution of all things."[5]

In another and lower sense, however, regeneration may be regarded as taking place in this life. For the final state of the moral being may be allowed to act retrospectively, and appropriate him from a previous and introductory stage; in which case regeneration belongs to this life, and is a present fruit of the Gospel dispensation. Because the final state has clearly its beginning in this world, the goodness of the perfected creature is the same goodness in substance with that which he had in this life before he was perfected; so long as he is the same being, it is the same goodness in both states, only in the one mature, in the other incipient. But this, though an allowable, is a secondary and incorrect sense of regeneration. For the essential characteristic of the regenerate state is not the substance but the mode of goodness, — the mode of its existence in the soul, which in the regenerate being is constant, eternal, and divine, as distinguished from being changeable and interrupted, which it must always be in this world.

And these two senses of regeneration suggest the relation in which regeneration stands to *conversion.* Regeneration in the latter and lower sense is identical with conversion, but in the former higher and stricter sense, regeneration is distinguished from and contrasted to conversion. Conversion is the *condition* of regeneration understood in this stricter sense. Certain conditions are, according to Scripture, required for

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[1] Luke xx 36. [2] Rom. viii. 23.
[3] Regeneratio novissima, — a phrase of St. Augustine's.
[4] Matt. xix. 28. [5] Acts iii. 21.

regeneration, viz. repentance and faith, that is to say, change of heart and life; upon which change, or what is commonly called conversion, taking place in the individual, regeneration is supposed to be conferred upon him in the ordinance of baptism. Conversion, then, is the condition, regeneration is what is conferred upon that condition being fulfilled; conversion is the means, regeneration the end; conversion the work, regeneration the reward. Conversion is change of heart for the time being, regeneration is this change fixed and secured;—which is the proper reward of such a change; for the best reward it can have is its own perpetuation. Conversion is the earthly, regeneration the heavenly, mode and state of goodness; the one exposed to, the other beyond the chance of, a falling away. The converted man is a denizen as yet of this changing and unstable world, going to leave it indeed, but still in it, and within reach of its formidable arm. But at baptism he is supposed to be taken out of the world into another society, and another and a higher sphere of being. He is admitted into the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. Now he is risen again, he has his conversation in heaven, he is seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; in a word, he is regenerate, *i. e.* he has died to sin, and is alive to God, and that second life is final and everlasting. All this, if I may forestall here what I shall consider more at large hereafter, is included in the idea of the regenerate or baptismal state. The Church into which the Christian is brought at baptism is supposed to be a heavenly and spotless society; the mode in which it is spoken of in Scripture is boldly anticipatory, and assumes the heavenly life to be already begun upon earth. A high supposition is made, which, though evidently contrary to fact, and violated by everything we see around us, is still maintained as a high and edifying supposition. Undoubtedly Christians *ought* to be perfect; they

ought never to sin, they ought to live as if they were in heaven. Scripture simply assumes that they do what they ought to do; that is, this is one side of its language; though upon another side Scripture looks to facts, and describes this very church as a mixed and corrupt body, and its members as none of them perfect, and the greater proportion of them as worldly and sinful livers.

I proceed from the Scriptural to the Patristic sense of the term regeneration, and shall endeavour to show that that state, in the Patristic sense, is not one of mere power and capacity, but one of actual goodness, and that goodness final.

And, first, I will make the general remark that the language of the Fathers on this subject is not much more than an expansion or enlarged repetition of that of Scripture. Indeed, to suppose that the Fathers and early writers and teachers of the Church should substantially depart from the language of Scripture, especially on so important a subject, would be a supposition fatal to their authority. But they do not. Their language is such as we should naturally expect would rise upon such a type. The language of Scripture is the root and stock upon which that whole rich, varied, and adorned growth of centuries is formed; and, when the sense of Scripture is ascertained, it becomes at once a key to the language of the Fathers.

The Fathers, then, attach directly to the term regeneration the sense of actual holiness and goodness. Clement of Rome calls Noah "a preacher of regeneration," obviously using that word as a synonym with the word "righteousness," and the word "repentance," employed in corresponding expressions respecting Noah, the one by St. Peter[1], the other shortly before by himself.[2] St. Clement of Alexandria

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[1] "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness."— 2 Peter ii. 5.

[2] Νῶε ἐκήρυξε μετάνοιαν.—Ep. ad Cor. s. 7. Νῶε πιστὸς εὑρεθεὶς διὰ τῆς λειτουργίας αὐτοῦ παλιγγενεσίαν κόσμῳ ἐκήρυξεν.—s. 9.

uses it as identical with "a meek disposition," with being "like a little child," with "repentance," with "conversion of life," with "obedience," with "faith," with "a putting off of the garment of wickedness, and a putting on of immortality."[1] St. Cyprian uses it as identical with "a change of the man in mind and disposition."[2] Hippolytus uses it as identical with an entire change of life and conduct, with "the conquest of pleasure and pride, the throwing off of the filth and the burden of sin and corruption, and the removal of the panoply of Satan for the breastplate of faith."[3] Cyril of Alexandria uses it as involving purity of life, a clear conscience, and faith[4]; St. Basil, as implying "the breaking off an old," and the entrance upon "a new course of life."[5]

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[1] Ὁ πατὴρ ἀναγεννήσας πνεύματι εἰς υἱοθεσίαν ἡπίους οἶδεν, καὶ φιλεῖ τούτους μόνους.—Pædagog. lib. 1. c. 5.

Ἥκετε, ἥκετε, ὦ νεολαία ἡ ἐμή· ἦν γὰρ μὴ αὖθις ὡς τὰ παιδία γενήσεσθε, καὶ ἀναγεννηθῆτε, &c. — Ad Gentes, c. 9. The word ἀναγεννηθῆτε is put as a synonym for στραφῆτε, Matt. xviii. 3.

Οὕτως οὖν ἐπιστραφέντας ἡμᾶς αὖθις ὡς τὰ παιδία γενέσθαι βούλεται, τὸν ὄντως πατέρα ἐπιγνόντας, δι' ὕδατος ἀναγεννηθέντας.—Strom. 1. 3. c. 12.

Δεῖ γὰρ οὐ τὰ εἴδωλα μόνον καταλιπεῖν, ἃ πρότερον ἐξεθείαζεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ προτέρου βίου, τὸν ἐν πνεύματι ἀναγεννώμενον. — Strom. 1. 2. c. 13. The δεῖ here means that the regenerate man *must* act so in consistency, and to verify his name and profession as regenerate.

Ἄρα εἰκότως οἱ παῖδες τοῦ θεοῦ οἱ τὸν μὲν παλαιὸν ἀποθέμενοι ἄνθρωπον, καὶ τῆς κακίας ἐκδυσάμενοι τὸν χιτῶνα, ἐπενδυσάμενοι δὲ τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν τοῦ Χρίστου, ἵνα καινὸς γενόμενος λαὸς ἅγιος ἀναγεννηθέντες, ἀμίαντον φυλάξωμεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον. Καὶ νήπιος μὲν ὡς βρέφος τοῦ θεοῦ, κεκαθαρμένος πορνείας καὶ πονηρίας, &c.—Strom. 1. 1. c. 6.

Ἡμᾶς γάρ εἰσπεποίηται, καὶ ἡμῶν ἐθέλει μόνων κεκλῆσθαι πατὴρ, οὐ τῶν ἀπειθούντων.—Ad Gentes, c. 12.

[2] "Ego cum in tenebris atque in nocte cæca jacerem, cumque in salo jactantis sæculi natabundus ac dubiis vestigiis oberrantibus fluctuarem, vitæ meæ nescius, veritatis ac lucis alienus, difficile prorsus ac durum, pro illis tunc moribus, opinabar quod in salutem mihi divina indulgentia pollicebatur, ut quis renasci denuo posset, utque, in novam vitam lavacro aquæ salutaris animatus, quod prius fuerat exponeret, et, corporis licet manente compage, hominem animo ac mente mutaret." He then describes his regeneration as a conversion in the modern sense of the word, *i.e.* a sudden change of heart, and adds, "Scis ipse profecto quid detraxerit nobis quidve contulerit, mors ista criminum, vita virtutum."—Ep. 1. ad Donatum.

[3] Δεῦρο τοίνυν ἀναγεννήθητι ἄνθρωπε εἰς υἱοθέσιαν θεοῦ. Καὶ πῶς; φησίν. Ἐὰν μηκέτι μοιχεύσῃς, μηδὲ φονεύσῃς, μηδὲ εἰδωλολατρεύσῃς, ἐὰν μὴ κρατήθῃς ὑφ' ἡδονῆς, ἐὰν μὴ πάθους ὑπερηφανίας κυριεύσῃ σὲ, ἐὰν ἀποξέσῃς τὸν ρύπον τῆς ἀκαθαρσίας, καὶ ἀποῤῥίψῃς τὸ φόρτιον τῆς ἁμαρτίας, ἐὰν ἀποδύσῃ τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ διαβόλου, καὶ ἐνδύσῃ τὸν θώρακα τῆς πίστεως.—Hom. in Theoph., n. 10.

[4] Οἷς γὰρ ἔτι τὸ τραχὺ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν περίκειται, οὗτοι ἐν τοῖς ἀριστεροῖς τυγχάνουσι, διὰ τὸ μὴ προσελθεῖν τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ χάριτι τῇ δοθείσῃ διὰ Χριστοῦ ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ λουτροῦ ἀναγεννήσει. Ἀναγέννησιν δὲ οὐ σωμάτων λέγω, ἀλλὰ ψυχῆς τὴν πνευματικὴν ἀναγέννησιν.—Catech. I. sect. 2.

[5] Πρῶτον μὲν ἀναγκαῖον τὴν ἀκολουθίαν τοῦ προτέρου βίου διακοπῆναι· τοῦτο δὲ ἀδύνατον μὴ ἄνωθεν γεννηθέντα, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ κυρίου φωνήν. Ἡ γὰρ παλιγγενεσία, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸ δηλοῖ τὸ

But the sense in which the Fathers understand regeneration is principally seen through the medium of their doctrine of baptism, or their account of the nature and character of the baptismal state; for the Fathers undoubtedly, whether hypothetically or literally, regard baptism as conveying regeneration; and therefore, whatever they assert of the baptismal, they assert of the regenerate state.

Now, in describing the baptismal state, the Fathers use a whole class of expressions, of a kind obviously inapplicable to the mere capacity for, and applicable only to the actual state of, holiness and goodness. So that, making every allowance for the disposition of writers to exaggeration and over-high colouring, we cannot possibly suppose that they could have used such language of a state which was no better than an indeterminate and neutral one, common to good and bad alike. "We descend into the water," says St. Barnabas, "full of sins and defilement, and come up again bringing forth in our hearts the fruit of a holy fear and hope."[1] "We descend into the water," says Hermas, "consigned to death, and come up assigned to life."[2] Baptism is a "cleansing," a "quickening," a "reformation," "the attainment of eternal life," says Tertullian. "Come," says Hippolytus, "to the immortality of baptism, come to freedom from slavery, to a kingdom from tyranny, to incorruption from corruption."[3] "Being baptized we are enlightened," says St. Clement of Alexandria, "being enlightened we are adopted sons, being adopted sons we are made perfect, being made perfect we are rendered immortal." "Baptism," says Optatus, "is the life of virtues, the death of crimes, the obtaining of the heavenly kingdom, the port of innocence, and the shipwreck of sins." "It is," says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, "the ransom of captives, the remission of offences, the

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ὄνομα, δευτέρου βίου ἐστὶν ἀρχή, ὥστε πρὶν ἄρξασθαι τοῦ δευτέρου, πέρας χρὴ δοῦναι τῷ προλαβόντι.—Lib. de Spirit. Sanct. c. 15.

[1] Epistle, c. 11.
[2] Simil. ix. c. 16.
[3] Homil. in. Theoph. sect. 8.

death of sin, the regeneration of the soul, the garment of light, the holy seal indissoluble, the chariot of heaven, the luxury of Paradise, the attainment of the kingdom and the gift of adoption."[1] And he thus addresses the baptized person:—"Thou art transplanted among the invisible olive trees, grafted from the wild to the fruitful, from sins to righteousness, from pollution to purity.[2] . . . Dead in sins thou wentest down, quickened in righteousness thou comest up.[3] . . . For, having been baptized unto Christ, and put on Christ, thou hast been made conformable to the Son of God, thou art predestinated to the adoption of a son, thou partakest of the fashion of Christ's glorious body, thou partakest of Christ, thou art properly called Christ; and God said, 'Touch not my Christ, my anointed,' of thee."[4] Baptism, according to Jerome, imparts the new heart and the new spirit spoken of by David and Ezekiel. "The spirit deifies me in baptism," says St. Gregory Nazianzen; "I become the image of God, I am clothed with Christ, I am changed into Christ at baptism."[5] "In the sacrament of baptism," says St. Ambrose, "thou puttest off the old, and puttest on the new-born man. . . . Thou art dead to the world and risen to God, dead to sin and raised up to life eternal."[6] "Blessed be God, who alone doeth wonders," says St. Chrysostom, "who made all things, and changeth all. Behold! they enjoy the calm of freedom who a little before were held captives; they are denizens of the Church who were wandering in error, and they have the lot of righteousness who were in the confusion of sin. For they are not only free, but holy; not only holy, but righteous; not righteous only, but sons; not sons only, but heirs; not heirs only, but brethren of Christ; not

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[1] Catech. Introductory Lecture, n. 16. Basil has almost the same words. —Hom. in Sanct. Bapt. n. 5.
[2] Lect. 1. § 4.
[3] Lect. 3. § 12.
[4] Lect. 21. § 1.
[5] Orat. 33. 40.
[6] In B. 36. n. 63. De Myst. c. 4.

brethren of Christ only, but co-heirs; not only co-heirs, but members; not members only, but a temple; not a temple only, but instruments of His spirit."[1] "Dost thou," says St. Basil, "invited to ascend to heaven by water and the spirit, as Elias did by fire, not hasten to the call? O wonder! thou art renewed, yet not dissolved; re-cast, yet not broken; cured, yet not pained, and thou thinkest it no gain!"[2]

Now it may be said that the high, holy, and heavenly state described in these passages does not stand for the state itself, but only for a certain power conferred by God in the Gospel dispensation of attaining to that state. But this is certainly not the natural meaning of the language, which plainly expresses the state, and not merely the power of attaining it. And if this meaning is clear from the language itself, it is much more clear when we view that language in connection with the Scripture type, upon which we should naturally expect the subsequent language of the Church would be formed. It is evident that this whole description is only an expansion of the New Testament representation of the Christian state as one of actual goodness, and that final and triumphant; such as, in truth, is not realised in this world at all, but only in a future. The Fathers represent, with St. Paul, the Christian as already lifted up above the world; dead to sin, and alive unto God; crucified in the old man, and risen with Christ; seated in heavenly places, and having his conversation in heaven. They represent his state as being "immortality," "freedom," "incorruption," "perfection," "the life of virtues," "the death of sins;" as "righteousness," "holiness," "eternal life," "a deity," "paradise," and "heaven."

It is a further test of their meaning, that in exhorting the baptized to holiness of life they use the same form of exhortation that we just observed to be so prominent in St. Paul's

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[1] Orat. ad Neophytos ap. Augustin. c. Julian. l. 1. § 21. Dr. Pusey's Tract on Baptism, p. 21.

[2] Hom. in S. Bapt. n. 3.

epistles, implying the positive inconsistency of sin with the baptismal state; and so do not so much prohibit sin as wrong in the Christian, as exclude it as impossible. "Our body," says Chrysostom, "buried in baptism, bore fruit, righteousness, sanctification, adoption, unnumbered blessings. . . . . Having believed, and been enlightened, we have become actually dead to sin, so as to obey it no longer. Baptism hath done this for us, it hath deadened us to sin." This, then, is already the state of the Christian. There follows immediately an exhortation to the very same state: "If, then, thou hast died to sin, remain dead; and, though sin issue ten thousand commands, obey it no longer, but remain motionless as the dead."[1] But if a man is dead to sin he *must* remain dead to it; the natural life cannot be resumed when it is once over; no more can a man who has died to sin live to sin again He exhorts the Christian, then, not to sin by telling him that he cannot; he is to die because he is dead, and to be motionless because he cannot move. The final, perfect, and heavenly life is assumed in him as the very ground of the exhortation. St. Chrysostom himself calls attention to and comments on St. Paul's use of this form of exhortation; on his first telling the Colossians that they are dead, and their life hid with Christ in God, and then urging them to lead this very life of mortification: "For ye died. But who so senseless as to buy servants or costly apparel for a corpse?"[2] St. Gregory of Nyssa uses the same form of exhortation: "We are the sons of God. Wherefore it becomes us to examine the properties of our Father, that, forming ourselves after his likeness, we may be genuine, and not supposititious sons." He first supposes Christians to be genuine sons of God, and then tells them to be such. He continues: "If we have been conformed to the death of Christ, sin must be for the

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[1] Hom. 10. in Rom. p. 525. Dr. Pusey's Tract, p. 98.

[2] Chrys. ad loc. Hom. vii. 1, 2, 3. Dr. Pusey's Tract, p. 176.

future wholly dead in us. . . . Flee, then, from us," he addresses the devil, "accursed one; wouldst thou strip the dead? A dead man loveth not the flesh; a dead man is not captivated by wealth; a dead man bears not false witness; a dead man lies not, steals not, reviles not."[1] That is, he exhorts the Christian to die to sin, because he is dead already. Theodoret does the same: "Thou becamest dead to it, and wast buried with Christ; how, then, shouldst thou again admit that sin?"[2] "Christians," says St. Ambrose, "have the inheritance given them, and they ought to take greater heed, who have what they may lose, than those who have it not."[3] That is, he exhorts Christians to strive for an inheritance, because they already have it.

While regeneration, however, or the Christian state, is primarily, in the language of the Fathers, a final and heavenly state, such as is not realised in this life, it is still regarded as in a sense belonging to this life, and being a present fruit of the Gospel dispensation. But neither in this sense do they at all regard regeneration as a mere power or capacity, but as an actual state of goodness; and they identify it with conversion of heart and practical holiness; that whole frame of mind which distinguishes the true Christian from the man of the world. "What is the use," says Justin Martyr to the Jews, "of that baptism by which the flesh and the body only shine. That is the true baptism which Isaiah proclaimed, and which we have. Let your soul be baptized from wrath and avarice, from envy and hatred, and your body is clean.[4] . . . Christ hath said, 'Except ye be born again ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.' It is impossible, indeed, for a man literally to be born again, but Isaiah tells us what by the new birth is to be understood: 'Wash, be ye clean; remove your wickedness from your

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[1] De Bapt. Christi, p. 380; Dr. Pusey's Tract, p. 121.
[2] Tract, p. 107. [3] Tract, p. 108. [4] Dial. cum Tryph. s. 14.

souls; learn to do good; judge for the orphan, do justice to the widow.'"[1] For the meaning, then, of regeneration, the true nature of the spiritual state associated with baptism, Justin refers us to Isaiah, who describes a state of practical conversion and change of heart and life. Irenæus maintains the same test of the spiritual state: "The breath of life which makes the animal man is one thing, the quickening spirit which makes the spiritual man is another thing. God gives breath indiscriminately to all who live upon the earth, He gives the Spirit only to those who trample upon worldly lusts. This is that Spirit which hath been given in these last times, the Spirit of adoption, . . . by which the man throws off the lusts of the flesh, as the Apostle says to the Colossians: 'Mortify your members upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.'"[2] The Spirit is here said to be given only to those who exhibit practical holiness of life; not meaning, of course, that sinners have not the assistance of the Spirit to enable them to abandon their sins, but that the Christian is not a sinner, and that the *regenerating* gift of the Spirit which *he* enjoys is identical with a holy life. "How," says Hippolytus, "shall a man be regenerated and become a son of God? By not committing adultery, murder, or idolatry; by overcoming pleasure and pride; by throwing off the filth and burden of sin and corruption; by putting off the panoply of Satan, and putting on the breastplate of faith; by seeking judgment, relieving the oppressed, judging the fatherless, pleading for the widow."[3]

It is true that, while the Fathers describe the baptismal state as one of actual goodness and holiness, they regard it as one of power and capacity as well, and having relation to the future warfare of the Christian as well as being a present disposition and character. They regard him as possessing in it an armour and defence, which he is bound to

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[1] Apol. 1. § 61. [2] Adv. Hæreses, l. 5. c. 12. [3] In Theoph s. 10.

employ against the assaults of sin which await him, and as the means and instrument of a good life to come. But no argument can be drawn from this for a power and capacity *alone* as their sense of the baptismal state, because the two characteristics may exist together. The power, indeed, of being virtuous is so far from being opposed to the state or habit; that the habit is itself the very greatest power; and a man who is already good is the most able to do good acts and abstain from bad ones. The goodness of glorified spirits, and even that of God Himself, is thus a power as well as a state. And though the Fathers regard this power as one which the Christian may neglect and suffer to be idle, this does not show that they oppose it to actual goodness; for a man may neglect his own goodness, and fall away from it. It only shows that so far they do not contemplate such actual goodness as final, but only as goodness for the time being.

Regeneration, then, I conclude, is described in the Fathers, in the first place, as actual goodness, and not the mere capacity for it; and, in the next place, as final goodness. The Christian has taken leave of sin once and for all, and has died for evermore to it, so that the very idea of his sinning is absurd. They say, with St. John, that the regenerate man cannot sin; with St. Paul, that he is a slave to righteousness: *i. e.* they understand by regeneration a condition of the soul which is not realised in this world, that perfect, pure, and unchangeable goodness which will succeed this mixed and introductory one; in a word, the second life, which cannot begin till the first one is over.

To this evidence of the Scriptural and Patristic meaning of regeneration may be added, in conclusion, the evidence contained in the meaning of certain terms which are applied to the same class to which the term regenerate is applied, and which may be called synonyms for that term; and in the nature of certain recognised types and figures of regeneration.

1. The terms "elect," "predestinated," "sealed," and

"heir" are applied to the same class to which the term regeneration is applied, that is, to the whole body of Christians; they therefore involve the same Christian status. But these terms involve more than a power and capacity, or opportunity of attaining to actual holiness, *i. e.* actual holiness itself.

Election and predestination signify in the New Testament the Divine choice from all eternity of certain persons for, and the ordaining of them to, eternal salvation.[1] But men can only obtain salvation by leading a holy and good life. The state of election and predestination, therefore, must be one of actual holiness and goodness. The end implies the means necessary to obtain it.

The term "seal," of such constant use in Scripture, has the same force and meaning as the two just mentioned. A seal is put upon a thing to indicate either to whom it belongs, or to what use, place, or purpose it is destined. Thus we seal a letter to signify that the contents of it are private, or of private right or ownership, and do not belong to the world at large. We seal a will, or any other document, to show that we own it or acknowledge it as our own. Again, goods and articles of commerce are sealed to mark of what quality they are, and for what use they are intended, a higher or a lower one. When God chooses persons, then, out of the rest of the world as objects of His special love and mercy, and ordains them to everlasting salvation, He is represented in Scripture as putting His seal upon them, to indicate that relation and destination. Thus Christians are said to be "sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption[2]," *i. e.* to have the mark of God upon them, noting that they are His, and that He designs to bring them to final redemption. And God is said to "have sealed them, and given the earnest

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[1] For proof of this I may refer to various parts of my treatise on Predestination, especially note viii. p. 371.

[2] Eph. iv. 30.

of the Spirit in their hearts[1];" *i. e.* to have set a seal upon them as a token or pledge of what He will ultimately do for them. And the seal is said to mean this: viz., that "the Lord knoweth them that are His[2];" *i. e.* to mean God's acknowledgment of men as His sons. And in the Revelation "the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads[3]," as a sign that they are such.

The Schoolmen adopted, indeed, another sense of the term "seal." They explained the difficulty that all Christians were spoken of in the New Testament as sealed, while all Christians were not in fact holy, by attaching a neutral sense to the term; and the Scholastic "*character*" stood for a mark simply representing the rite of baptism; and, though indelible, adhering to the saved and to the damned alike. The *grace* of baptism was indeed wholly separated from this "character," and ascribed to another and a different act of God. But this was a complete departure from the Scriptural meaning of the word, in which it plainly stands for a mark of Divine acceptance, and distinguishes the true Christian from the man of the world; as well as from the Patristic meaning, which follows the Scriptural. The seal, according to Hermas, "assigns us to eternal life[4];" according to Irenæus, "hath made us spiritual[5];" according to Gregory Nazianzen, is a "sign of security, and a mark whose servants we are[6];" according to Cyril, speaking of St. Paul, "was the impress of the Spirit, which made him a chosen vessel[7];" according to Chrysostom, "is the mark of a great Providence, not taking us by lot only, not setting us apart only, but sealing us that we should believe and inherit the things to come." "How wilt thou return to Paradise," says St. Ambrose, "except thou art

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[1] 2 Cor. i. 22.
[2] 2 Tim. ii. 19.
[3] Rev. vii. 3.
[4] Simil. 9. § 16.
[5] On Eph i. 14. "In whom ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise;" "Si ergo pignus hoc habitans in nobis, jam spirituales efficit," &c.—Adv. Hær. lib. v. c. 8.
[6] σφραγῖδα δὲ ὥς συντήρησιν καὶ δεσποτείας σημείωσιν.—Orat. 40.
[7] τῇ ψυχῇ τὴν σφραγῖδα χαρισάμενον, σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς ἐποίησε.—Catech. 17.

sealed with baptism? Knowest thou not that the fiery sword guardeth the way to the tree of life, to the unbelieving terrible and burning, but approachable and radiant to the faithful; yea, made by God to turn every way; its back to the faithful, its edge to all without the seal."[1] The seal stands in these passages for a mark of Divine favour and acceptance. And thus the ancient liturgies pray that the baptized person may "keep the seal immoveable," "preserve unhurt the seal," "the mark of the life-giving Spirit," the "life-giving impress;" and not only pray that he *may* be, but pronounce that he *is* "marked unto life." "Now, then, look for the heavenly promises and the coming of God Almighty, by whom thou art illuminated, and by whose seal thou art marked in the forehead, by this mark, which shall not be effaced."[2] The seal is regarded throughout as denoting a state of acceptance in the person sealed, though this state is regarded sometimes as fixed, sometimes as forfeitable.

The relation of "heir" is another analogy drawn from human things to illustrate the fundamental state and destiny of Christians. They are said to be "heirs of salvation[3]," "heirs of the kingdom[4]," "heirs of the grace of life."[5] But an heir to an estate is not a person who has simply the power and the means of gaining an estate, but a person who will succeed to the possession of it certainly and as a matter of course. Those who are heirs of salvation, then, are persons who *will* be saved, who have not merely the power of obtaining, but are in possession of the right and title to, a final and heavenly reward. But such a title implies actual goodness and holiness in the possessor.

Here are a succession of terms, then, "elect," "predestinated," "sealed," "heir," which, as denoting a state of destination or immediate proximity to an eternal reward, involve actual goodness and holiness. And these terms are synony-

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[1] Hom. in Sanct. Bapt. s. 2.
[2] Dr. Pusey's Tract on Baptism, p. 144.
[3] Heb. i. 14. [4] James ii. 5. [5] 2 Pet. ii. 7.

mous with regeneration, are applied to the same persons to which the term regeneration is applied, and express the same general status which the latter term expresses. It follows that the term regeneration implies actual goodness and holiness.

2. We get the same result from certain recognised types and figures of regeneration. The ablutions of the old law were an actual cleansing of the flesh; and therefore regeneration, which they typify, is an actual purification and sanctification of the heart, as the Apostle describes it: "Let us draw near with a true heart, with full assurance of faith, having had our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."[1] The state here described is the state of regeneration; that into which the Christian entered "when his body was washed with pure water" at baptism; and it is described as an *actual* purification of the heart, in the same way that the washing of the old law, tacitly referred to as its type, was an actual cleansing of the body. And so the Fathers use the type: "*They* were sprinkled as to the body," says St. Chrysostom, "*we* as to the conscience."[2] "They used sprinklings in the law," says Theodoret, "and washed the body continually; but they who live after the new covenant are purified as to the soul by all holy baptism, and make the conscience free from its former stains."[3]

Another great type of the state of regeneration is circumcision; and here the force of the type is equally plain. Circumcision was an actual cutting off of the flesh, and therefore that state of which it is a type is an actual throwing off of sin and worldly affections; and the type is so employed in the Old Testament. "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your hearts, and be ye no more stiff-necked:"[4] "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and all

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[1] Heb. x. 22. [2] Dr. Pusey's Tract, p. 185. [3] Ibid. [4] Deut. x. 16.

thy soul."[1] And it is employed very prominently in the same way in the New Testament. "He is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter."[2] And the admonition that, "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature[3]," "but keeping the commandments of God[4]," "but faith, which worketh by love[5]," expresses the same thing. For, the argument being that the reality itself, and not the type of it, is the important concern, the Apostle implies that this renewal of heart, obedience, faith, and love, are the reality which circumcision typifies. Circumcision, then, evidently typifies actual holiness. But circumcision is acknowledged to be the type of the baptismal state; and so St. Paul applies it. For the texts, "In whom also ye were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off of the sins of the flesh[6]," "we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit[7]," evidently imply that the state into which Christians had entered when they became Christians was inward circumcision, or that which outward circumcision figures. Circumcision, then, is the type of the baptismal state, or of regeneration, as indeed is clearly expressed in the Apostle making it the type of the "new creature;" for to be a new creature and to be regenerate are the same thing. But if circumcision is the type of actual goodness and holiness, and also the type of regeneration, regeneration must be actual goodness and holiness.

The Fathers give the same meaning to, and adopt the Scriptural use of, the type of circumcision. "We," says Justin Martyr, "who have obtained access to God through Christ, have not received that fleshly circumcision, but a spiritual one. Enoch, and those like him, observed this circumcision; and we, who had been sinners, received it by the

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[1] Deut. xxx. 6. [3] Gal. vi. 15. [5] Gal. v. 6. [7] Phil. iii. 3.
[2] Rom ii. 29. [4] 1 Cor. vii. 19. [6] Col. ii. 11.

mercy of God in baptism, where all may obtain it," "Of what use, then," he asks, "is circumcision to me, who am approved by the witness of God? Of what use is this baptism to me, who am baptized by the Holy Spirit."[1] Fleshly circumcision is here evidently regarded as the type of a certain spiritual circumcision, which spiritual circumcision is actual holiness of life; for he says it is the same as the circumcision which Enoch and those of like life and character to him had, which could not be any other. But, such being the nature of spiritual circumcision, "we entered," he adds, "into this state at baptism; at which sacrament," he continues, "everybody may be admitted into it." It is evident, then, that Justin, following St. Paul, regards spiritual circumcision as actual holiness, and baptism as spiritual circumcision; that therefore the baptismal state, or regeneration, is supposed by him to be actual holiness. "The circumcision of the flesh," says Irenæus, "figures spiritual circumcision; as says the prophet, 'Circumcise the hardness of your heart;' and as says the Apostle, 'We were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.' Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Lot, pleased God without the fleshly circumcision[2]," — *i. e.*, by the spiritual one. Irenæus, then, regards, with St. Paul, spiritual circumcision as actual holiness, and regeneration as spiritual circumcision: he regards regeneration, then, as actual holiness. Origen, after defining spiritual circumcision, with the Apostle, as "serving God in the Spirit," refers to it as being the acknowledged state of the baptized, or regeneration.[3] "Circumcision," says Athanasius, "was the sign of regeneration by baptism; wherefore when the reality came the sign ceased. For, when the whole of the old man was put off, the sign of a putting off of part of it was superfluous."[4]

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[1] Dial. cum Tryph. s. 43. See too s. 113.

[2] Adv. Hær. l. 4. c. 30.

[3] In Ep. ad Rom. l. 2. s. 12. "Hæc est ut opinor circumcisio quam prodesse docet Apostolus si legem custodias Spiritus secundum quam circumcideris corde." He says that to the Jew who had not this, his circumcision was reckoned for uncircumcision, and adds, "Sed et in ecclesia qui per baptismi gratiam circumciditur, si post hæc prævaricator sit legis Christi, *circumcisio baptismi* ad infidelitatis ei præputium reputabitur."

[4] De Sabbato et Circumcisione, s. 5.

Spiritual circumcision is described here as the actual putting off of the whole of the old man, or of all sin; and this is identified expressly with regeneration. "Circumcision," says St. Chrysostom, "is no longer with the knife, but in Christ himself. For not as before doth the hand effect this circumcision, but the Spirit. . . . . For ye have not stripped off the flesh, but sins. When and how? In baptism."[1] "We are circumcised," says Hilary, "not by a carnal circumcision, but by the circumcision of Christ; *i. e.*, being reborn into a new man. For when we are baptized with Him in His baptism, we must needs die as to the old man."[2] St. Jerome, St. Basil, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Cyril of Alexandria, all regard circumcision as the type of actual holiness, and, at the same time, as the type of regeneration.[3] They therefore regard regeneration as actual holiness.

To this proof of the nature of regeneration, as understood by the inspired writers and the Fathers, I will briefly add the sense attached to it in the schools. The schools, as represented by Peter Lombard and Aquinas, certainly do not regard regeneration as a state of mere capacity for holiness and goodness, but as involving that character itself. They understand by it a state of grace; but grace signifies, in the schools, not grace as a means, but as an effect; *i. e.*, not merely assisting grace, which depends for its effect on the human will, but grace which is effective, or carries its own designed effect with it.[4] The function of grace is to infuse the theological and moral virtues into the human heart, which thus receives in grace a renewal in fact, and not merely an assistance of which that renewal is the object. Baptism was pronounced, in the schools, to "confer grace and the virtues."[5] "Baptism," says Peter Lombard, "is the abolition of sin,

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[1] Chrys. ad loc. Dr. Pusey's Tract, p. 322.

[2] De Trin. ix. 9.

[3] Dr. Pusey's Tract, p. 329.

[4] Gratia gratum faciens. Summa Theol. 1ma. 2dae. Q. iii.

[5] Sum Theol. 3tia. Q. 69. art. 4. Between the grace of baptism and the virtues infused by it, the subtle distinction was drawn, that grace was the essence,—the virtues, the incorporation or manifestation of it. Regene-

the apposition of virtues."[1] Aquinas lays down the position just mentioned, and carries it out both by explanation and application. The grace and virtues conferred in baptism imply fruitfulness in good works[2]; and children obtain grace and the virtues in baptism.[3] The schools had indeed a remarkable machinery in readiness for reconciling this language with facts; but I am speaking here simply of the sense in which they understood the term regeneration. In their interpretation of that term, they did not venture to depart from the great Scriptural sense of it, which the Fathers had followed and handed down, as goodness *in esse* and not *in posse.* We have nowhere, either in Scripture or antiquity, any authority for understanding regeneration as a state of mere power and capacity for the spiritual life and character,—a state involving only assisting grace, means of grace, and the like. One meaning is stamped upon the word in Scripture—and the Church has never used it in any other,—that of real holiness and goodness.

III. I proceed to my third head,—that the goodness and holiness signified by regeneration is an imparted one or a Divine gift, as distinguished from being acquired or gained by man's own efforts.

It is evident that a man cannot give birth of any kind to himself,—either a first birth or a second birth; and therefore the mere use of the term regeneration, or second birth, to signify holiness and goodness shows that the holiness and goodness signified by it must be a Divine gift, as distinguished from being an acquisition of man's own. But here a distinction must be drawn.

Regeneration, then, in its primary and correct sense, as meaning the final and unchangeable life, must evidently be,

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ration, as being a participation of the Divine nature, was specially connected with the former. But as grace and the virtues went together, such an appropriation had as little substantial meaning as the distinction upon which it went. The two were the same thing; and regeneration, or the baptismal state, involved both.

[1] L. 4. Dist. 3. s. 11.

[2] Sum. Theol. 3tiæ. Q. 69. art. 5.

[3] Ibid. art. 6.

upon the plainest religious principles, a Divine gift or grace. It would be absurd to suppose that the will of man could put *itself* into that new state in which it is for ever and unalterably fixed on the side of good; and therefore such a fixing of it must be a Divine act, and the admission into this new state a Divine grace. All Christians, therefore, agree in considering the change from the mutable to the immutable state of the will, which will take place on admission to heaven, to be a Divine gift,—though it is a gift conferred upon conditions, and not absolutely and freely. The man must have shown qualifications, indeed, for this final state before he is admitted to it; he receives it as a reward. But a reward is still a gift.

But regeneration in the secondary sense, as meaning a present conversion of heart and life, is not acknowledged by all Christians to be a Divine gift simply, but is regarded by one school as a simple gift, by another as in part a human acquisition. Scripture, however, does plainly represent regeneration even in this sense, as a simple Divine gift. Thus our Lord, in the discourse with Nicodemus, certainly appears to be speaking of an actual present change in the human heart when He speaks of the new birth. And yet, if we take the natural meaning of His words, He certainly appears also to describe it as a simple effect of Divine power or grace: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit[1]:" *i. e.* the spiritual man is spiritual because he is born such, his spiritual character being the simple effect of the operation of the Spirit, who begets him, as the natural parent begets his offspring, like Himself. And what follows sustains and carries out this meaning:—"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." If the effect were of our own producing, we should know something about the process of production; but of this we are here said

[1] John iii. 6.

to know nothing, and only to feel the effect when it takes place as we feel a stir of the air, which rises on a sudden without our knowing at all whence or how. It is evidently a present change of heart, or what is called conversion, which is referred to in this language; and yet the change referred to is evidently spoken of as a simple Divine gift. I need not adduce the many passages in which St. Paul speaks of regeneration in this sense as a pure Divine gift.

How is this to be explained then?—I mean, that regeneration often stands for present conversion of heart and life, and yet that, by the force of the term, regeneration must be a simple Divine gift. For is change of life, it will be asked, simply a Divine gift? is it not the result of man's own free-will as well? The answer is, that the term regeneration belongs to a general department of Scripture language respecting Divine grace; that department, viz., in which grace is exhibited as all powerful, and absolutely creative, bending the flexible will of man in whatever direction it pleases, and fashioning the new creature by a simple act of Divine workmanship; that is to say, it is part of the Predestinarian language of Scripture, and is to be classed along with the terms "elect," "predestinated," and other like terms belonging to one side of Scripture teaching.

IV. Regeneration, then, having been shown to be actual goodness, present or final, and that goodness an imparted one, I proceed to my fourth head, that the goodness signified by regeneration is not the less actual because it is imparted.

There is a danger, as soon as ever the actual goodness, signified by regeneration, is admitted to be a Divine gift, that to some minds it will cease to appear actual goodness, and forthwith be regarded as a mere power or capacity, imparted by God, of attaining that state. For the account of the operation of Divine grace with which many are most familiar, is, that Divine grace confers the power of leading a good life, and that the human will avails itself of this power, and carries it into act. The operation, then, of Divine grace

being, according to this view, the imparting of a power, regeneration will be set down as being no more than an imparted power, or assisting grace, as soon as it is understood to be a grace or gift. The plainest representations of it as goodness in fact will be passed over or explained away; and when the Apostle argues from the fact to the duty, and tells Christians that, because they have been already made, they ought to *be* righteous, the argument will be explained upon this distinction, viz., that the righteousness which is given by God is the power, the righteousness which is to be wrought by man the actuality; the one an assisting grace, the other the ultimate object for which such assistance was given. And in that case the whole purpose for which this chapter has been written will be frustrated, and regeneration will fall back again into that very meaning from which it has been here my special endeavour to rescue it.

I must therefore guard the reader against such an impression, and urge him to fix firmly on his mind a fundamental and pervading distinction in Scripture. Scripture has two modes of accounting for human actions, one on a principle of grace, the other on that of free-will; and each of these, according as one or the other is applied, absorbs the result. When, then, grace is put forward as the account in Scripture of human righteousness, it does not divide that result with the human will, but takes the whole, and is regarded as giving righteousness not only in power but in fact. When Christians are exhorted, because they have already been made righteous, to live righteously, there is doubtless a distinction between the former righteousness and the latter, that the one is the work of God, the other the work of man. But this is no distinction between a power to be righteous and righteousness in fact, but between the same actual righteousness regarded as God's work and as man's. It would be absurd to suppose that the righteousness of grace was different from that of free-will; it is one and the same state accounted for in two ways. The explanation differs,

and not the thing; the cause, and not the effect. And therefore, while regeneration is doubtless a Divine gift, that goodness which is signified by it is not the less actual on that account. It is no more a mere capacity because it is God's work, than acquired goodness is a mere capacity because it is man's. The goodness which a man receives by birth from God, and that which he acquires for himself, is the same state, only referred in the one case to Divine, in the other to his own agency.

I am the more anxious to insist on this point because the term regeneration, or new birth, containing within itself the fact that such regeneration is a gift; this fact, contained in it, is of itself and *in limine* an insuperable bar, with one school of divines, to their being able in the least degree to regard such regeneration as actual goodness. The great reason, I say, why persons will not allow regeneration to be actual goodness, is that such regeneration is evidently, by the very force of the term, a gift, and because they will not acknowledge that actual goodness can be a simple gift of God. No, they say, if regeneration is a gift of God, this of itself shows what it is, that it is not goodness actual, but a capacity for goodness,—a new spiritual power or set of powers,—which a man has to cultivate by the exertion of his free-will till they *issue* in goodness actual. But I say again regeneration is a gift of God, and it is goodness actual too. The one fact does not at all conflict with the other. Scripture declares plainly in very many places that righteousness is the gift of God. This is one department of its language, and to this department of its language the term regeneration belongs. It belongs to the class of terms to which the terms "elect" and "predestinated" belong,—that class of terms which expresses the truth of the Divine Omnipotence over the will, actions, and whole life of man.

It is upon the proper recognition of this whole department of Scripture that the assignment to the term regenera-

tion of its true meaning of actual goodness depends. So long as persons either cannot or will not see this department of Scripture language, so long they will go on saying that regeneration is a capacity for, not the fact of, spiritual goodness. This artificial and untrue meaning of the term will prevail, because the true one is *in limine* excluded by a particular exclusive theory of free-will, which makes such meaning impossible. But let them give to the language of Scripture its plain and natural interpretation, and acknowledge that part of it which asserts man's righteousness to be a gift and a creation of God, bestowed upon those upon whom from all eternity He decreed to bestow it; let them acknowledge this department of Scripture language, and this great obstacle to accepting the true sense of regeneration will be at once removed; it will be seen that regeneration in this light is only one out of a whole set of terms in Scripture, containing the same doctrine with respect to the source of true righteousness.

I have thus endeavoured to show, first, that regeneration is, in its Scriptural and primitive sense, goodness itself, in distinction to being a mere capacity for it; secondly, that it is final goodness, in distinction to a transient and passing one; thirdly, that it is an imparted goodness, in distinction to being acquired; and, fourthly, that it is not the less real because it is imparted.

The proof, however, of the sense of the term regeneration has hitherto rested only on the evidence of the language bearing upon it. But, though this is the main source of proof, the conclusion to which it has led is strongly confirmed by evidence from another quarter, viz., that contained in the rite of baptism. But this will more conveniently form the subject of another chapter.

CHAP. II.

THE PRIMITIVE SENSE OF THE TERM REGENERATION AS ASCERTAINED FROM THE RITE OF BAPTISM.

THE argument for the meaning of Regeneration in the preceding chapter was drawn from the use of the term in Scripture and in the writings of the Fathers; and it was shown that regeneration, in the Scriptural and Patristic use of the term, was not a mere capacity for holiness and goodness, but was holiness and goodness itself; was not a mere assisting grace, enabling men to attain the end of a spiritual life and conduct, but was that end itself. It appeared that regeneration was a final and a heavenly state, supposed by anticipation to take place in this world when the individual was admitted by baptism into the bosom of the Christian Church, into the communion and fellowship of saints. When once a member of the Christian Church, it was supposed that he had entered a pure and heavenly society, and a high and glorious state, from which he could not afterwards fall away; that he was out of the reach of farther danger, and was lodged within the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem. Regeneration was the crown and reward of goodness, and not the mere capacity for and assistance to it. I say the crown and reward of goodness in this sense, that goodness and holiness became in the regenerate being a fixed and necessary character, whereas before they were subject to change and lapse; and the best reward of goodness is its own perpetuation. But this meaning of regeneration is also strongly confirmed by the whole character of the institution with which regeneration was connected, viz., the institution of

baptism: first, the conditions annexed to the reception of baptism; secondly, the unity; and, thirdly, the external form of the rite.

1. The very first thing we observe in the institution of baptism, is that the privilege conferred in it is given *upon conditions.* There is nothing more plainly laid down in Scripture than that faith and repentance are necessary in order to receive the benefit of regeneration which is attached to baptism, so that when infants are baptized they are baptized upon a supposed or representative faith and repentance. Now suppose regeneration to be a final state, a crown and a reward, and nothing is more intelligible than that conditions should be attached to the bestowal of it. A man must deserve his reward before he gets it, and must earn his crown before it is given him. He must show his fitness and his qualifications for a final state before he is admitted into it. But suppose regeneration to be only a preparatory thing, a means, an assisting grace, and what meaning is there in attaching conditions to the reception of it? Does God exact conditions of the sinner before He gives him His assistance, and wait till he has arrived at a holy disposition before He aids him in attaining it? Such a supposition is absurd, because it contradicts the whole use and meaning of assisting grace. The connection, then, of conditions with the gift of regeneration shows of itself that that gift must be something more than assisting grace.

Again, consider what is implied in the very fact of the fulfilment by the individual of these conditions before he receives the gift of regeneration? The fulfilment of these conditions implies that he has had assisting grace already, for nobody can attain true faith and conversion without the assistance of Divine grace. Then, if regeneration is only assisting grace, what does the individual possess in it which he had not before? What new benefit would in regeneration be conferred upon him? In what would his new state differ from his previous one? Assisting grace is the con-

dition and reward, the means and the end, the journey and the goal, both.

The attachment, then, of such conditions to the gift of regeneration shows of itself what the nature of that gift is. The gift must be an advance beyond the conditions required for it. But what advance is there beyond conversion of heart and life, already actually accomplished in the fulfilment of these conditions? What farther benefit is there which a man already converted from a sinful to a good and holy disposition — as he must be before he is fit for regeneration as bestowed in baptism — can receive? What, but that his conversion, having been attained, should be made by Divine grace permanent and final? This is a real, a most important addition to his ante-baptismal state. For a man may have attained a good habit of mind, but how does he know it will last? he may fall away from it before long; and if he recovers himself again, he may fall away again. All is risk and insecurity. Fix him, then, in his new habit, make his newly attained disposition his disposition once and for all, and an inestimable benefit is conferred upon him, he is raised from danger to safety, and from fear to triumph. But there is no other benefit which suits his case.

The supposition, then, of the grace of baptism or regeneration as a *final* grace, gives a meaning, a purpose, and a consistency to the whole institution. By a final grace I mean a grace which puts a man into a final and crowning state. A man before he is baptized is a converted man; but he may fall from this goodness, and therefore, as yet, his condition is incomplete. Baptism completes it. It gives him the grace wanted, which secures and makes final the goodness attained before it. The institution thus fulfils its profession, and puts the man truly into a new state. But suppose the grace of baptism an assisting grace only, and what consistency is there in the institution? what explanation is to be given of it? It professes, as its primary purpose, to put a man into an entirely new spiritual state; and it does

not do so. It exacts high conditions, as if it were going to bestow a crown and a reward; and it only gives the grace by which the conditions themselves were fulfilled.

It may be replied, perhaps, that there is no inconsistency in a later assisting grace being the crown and reward of the use of a previous one, if it is an assisting grace of a higher and nobler kind; that a grace may be final in relation to some grace before it, assisting in itself. But such a distinction as this would not at all satisfy the present case. It is evident that we are put, or supposed to be put, into an entirely new state at baptism, and that regeneration is a new life, a new creation. But does a merely higher degree of the same grace fulfil this complete distinction between the two states before and after baptism? What can a man, by any degree whatever of assisting grace after baptism, do which is wholly different from what he has done before it? He believes and repents before he is baptized; if he lives ever so long in the enjoyment of an assisting grace ever so high after baptism, will he end with anything more than that with which he has begun — faith and repentance? Will he ever be perfect so long as he has only a grace which depends on his own will for its effect? He cannot be. His religious course will at best be a mixture throughout of success and failure; the result, so long as it depends at all on himself, will be unsatisfactory; from first to last he will have to grieve over shortcomings and sins; and when he comes to die he will have to do simply that which he did when he was baptized, believe and repent. Then there is no new kind of effect which can be produced in him by assisting grace; and therefore, if this is all that baptismal grace or regeneration means, the latter is not a wholly new state, as it professes to be, but substantially the same with the state antecedent to baptism.

I will add that the preparation for baptism required in the early ages strongly confirms this conclusion. The severe discipline which the catechumens underwent previous

to their admission to the Sacrament, and which aimed at nothing short of the very strictest and holiest state of mind, as the condition of such admission, evidently contemplates and has respect to a final or crowning state, and not a preparatory one of merely assisting grace, as that which is obtained in the Sacrament. For otherwise why this preparation for it? Why so solemn, laborious, and exhausting an ascent up to that which when got is no more than a commencement; a mere opportunity of, and capacity for, a holy life; an enabling grace, an imparted power to be holy? Have men to watch and pray, to fast and mortify themselves, and attain by a long and harassing struggle, a victory over their own evil nature, — and is this all they are to get for it? They have had this already; for without assisting grace this victory could never have been obtained. But I need not repeat what I have just said. The catechetical discipline of the early church is, however, a practical acknowledgment of the benefit of baptism or regeneration as a goal and a climax, and not a merely preparatory state.

2. The next characteristic of the institution of baptism, and which is quite as prominent and striking as that characteristic which we have just considered, of its requiring conditions, is its unity or singularity; I mean that it is given once for all, and cannot be repeated. And this characteristic of baptism points exactly to the same conclusion to which the former characteristic did. For suppose the state of baptism to be a final one, and the unity of baptism follows as a matter of course; what need is there to repeat it, when its repetition becomes at once a simple inconsistency? But suppose the grace of baptism to be only an assisting or preparatory one, and what particular meaning is there in the unity of baptism, in the rite being confined to one performance? Why should it not be repeated? The grace which it gives may evidently be, and is, in the Christian life, given again and again, according to the wants and necessities of the man;

and, therefore, why should not the rite be performed again? Undoubtedly God can give the grace without the rite, and therefore it may please Him to impose this restriction, and make one celebration of the rite admit to a whole succession of Divine assistances which may follow it; but this would be an arbitrary appointment; whereas, if anything is clear about baptism, it is clear that its unity is imposed, not as an arbitrary arrangement, but as one with a special meaning; that the very nature and design of the institution require it, and would be violated by its violation.

And following from this characteristic of the unity of baptism was the position which meets us in Scripture, and was so prominent in early theology, of the impossibility of regaining the grace of baptism once lost by wilful sin. I refer to the noted texts in the Epistle to the Hebrews [1], of which this is the natural interpretation; as there can be no reasonable doubt that the enlightenment, the renewal, and the heavenly gift, mentioned in them, are an allusion to the baptismal gift, and therefore no doubt that the impossibility which they assert of the renewal of those gifts is asserted of the renewal of the baptismal gift. And this was the universal interpretation which the early Fathers gave to these texts, and upon which they raised a whole body of doctrinal language. The position indeed is, when examined, nothing more than the position of the unity of baptism in another shape. For the rite and the grace it conveys, going together, must be both subject to the same law; and if the rite cannot be repeated, neither can the grace be.

Let us take the position, however, as it stands, viz. that the grace of baptism, once fallen from, can never be regained; how does it agree with that grace being only an assisting and preparatory grace? Only see what, on this supposition,

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[1] Heb. vi. 4—6.; x. 26—29.

the position would amount to. A man falls from assisting grace when he does not use it, when he neglects it, and so is led into sin. Now, certainly, the Divine assistance may be neglected and despised till God at last in anger withdraws it. But would any man suppose that this withdrawal of it took place the first time it was wilfully neglected after baptism? What would our idea be of the justice and the mercy of a Being whose assistance to His moral creatures was limited and controlled not only by so harsh but so arbitrary and positively unmeaning a law? — who at a particular and, as it may be without levity called, accidental time of a person's life, gave him a certain assisting grace, and upon this being once neglected, never gave it again afterward? Such a notion is plainly absurd and irrational; it is, moreover, contrary to all Christian experience. God gives the same assisting grace again and again after the sinner has, time after time, neglected it; nor does He withdraw it till the sinner has, by his long and continued neglect of it, merited its withdrawal.

But suppose the state of baptism to be a final and crowning one, and this consequence of a fall from it is natural and inevitable. There cannot, indeed, be any fall, *really and in fact*, from a final state; for such a state is, by supposition, one from which there can be no fall; it is the perfect and eternal state of the soul. But when the baptized person sins, he falls from the supposition which has been made about him that he is in this state, and can never have the same supposition made again about him in this life. He has falsified a great title which was given him; and it can never belong to him on earth again. He has been supposed by St. John to be unable to sin, by St. Paul to be for ever dead to sin; but the event has proved that he is still accessible to the power of sin and alive to its pleasure. His heavenly life, then, has vanished; and he can never regain it below. He has not verified it in act, and therefore the supposition falls to the ground; he returns to the earthly

life of alloy, struggle, and difficulty, and no longer has, but waits for, his adoption and regeneration.

Nor is it irrelevant to observe that even the errors and excesses of the early ages, on the subject of post-baptismal sin, point to the finality of the baptismal state, as distinguished from its being a state of only assisting and preparatory grace. The doctrine of the early Church, with respect to the consequences of a fall from baptismal grace, was a modified one. The sinner was not admitted, indeed, to the grace again in its fulness and completeness, but its substance was still restored to him; and he enjoyed again, in the communion of the Church, and participation of the sacraments, peace and reconciliation with God. But this middle position did not satisfy a scrupulous and enthusiastic party in the Church, to whom it appeared unmeaning and inconsistent to exclude and to retain the sinner at the same time, to deprive him nominally of his baptismal grace, and yet substantially continue it to him. The Novatian School, then, acknowledged no state of grace which was not the original and strict baptismal one, and thus refused to regard the wilful sinner after baptism as in any other state than that of final condemnation. Nor was this crude and extravagant doctrine without an apparent foundation in Scripture. The texts just referred to in the Epistle to the Hebrews must be allowed, literally interpreted, to exceed the middle position of the Church with respect to the wilful sinner after baptism, and to abandon him simply to the wrath of God. They leave him no more sacrifice for sin, but only a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. But when the literal interpretation of a passage of Scripture is contrary to reason, as, on the grounds above mentioned, it is in the present case, as well as to other parts of the same Scripture, it must not be enforced. And therefore it only remains that we should give these texts such an interpretation as comes the nearest to their literal meaning without contradicting reason. The case of baptism which they contemplate is, doubtless, that of a

person of mature age, who has abandoned a life of sin, and received baptism in a frame of repentance and conversion. A return to sin after such an actual experience of the spiritual life, such a taste of the heavenly gift as this, is undoubtedly a very serious matter, and cannot be regarded at all in the same light as the sin previous to it. Nay, it would even appear, looking beforehand, to be irremediable, and would naturally, by the individual contemplating the prospect of it in his own case, be regarded as such. We may say that, looking forward from the present position of a holy and spiritual life, it would be natural to him to suppose and to think that, if he ever fell into a life of sin again, he would be quite past recovery, and that the grace of God would have been finally rejected. This is the proper and the natural idea, prospectively, of the consequences of such sin, in an earnest and anxious Christian; this is the way he puts them to himself; and this is a legitimate and most serviceable argument and safeguard by which he protects himself against incurring them. But this whole prospective view of a lapse from the baptismal state is altered, when it has become by an actual lapse retrospective. Is a man now to despair? No; the argument turns directly round; he must stir up his strength all the more to regain his position, and prove a greater power in grace than it has yet put forth. The decision of godly fear is reversed by a holy revenge; and the very same temper which assumed the hopelessness of a fall as a stimulus to watchfulness, uses it, when it has taken place, as a stimulus to fresh activity and aspiration.

But the Novatian doctrine on the subject of post-baptismal sin was a more rigid interpretation of Scripture. Novatian did not, indeed, assert the final exclusion of the wilful offender after baptism from the divine, but only from ecclesiastical, pardon; still, as the Church took its system and practice from revelation, as it bound those on earth who were bound in heaven, and loosed those on earth that were loosed in heaven, this was to say, that, as far as we knew

and was revealed to us, the wilful sinner after baptism was finally condemned. Nor was this doctrine, as I have said, a gratuitous invention of Novatian, but only an exaggeration of the view of post-baptismal sin which was generally received in the Church.

Now, suppose the grace of baptism to have ranked, in the theological system of the Church, as only an assisting or preparatory grace, and it is not easy to imagine how such a doctrine as this could have arisen. How could men have ever thought that a particular divine assistance, given often at a very early age and when the will had not arrived at its natural strength, was, if the will of the recipient neglected it, and so sin ensued, the very last grace that God gave? — that the fall was irrevocable and the person finally condemned? There was nothing to lead to such a doctrine; and men do not embrace a monstrous and absurd notion without some introduction to it, some reason for it, however mistaken a one. But if the state of baptism ranked in the Church's theological system as a *final* one, the doctrine is naturally accounted for by a confusion of thought such as we often see working in men's minds. The baptized person fell from a *supposed* final state; and Novatian treated him as if he had fallen from a *real* one. He thus naturally pronounced his fall to be irrevocable. For (though there is a contradiction by the very force of the terms in supposing it), *could* we suppose such a fall, what more awful and irrevocable one could there be? There was a received view, then, of the baptismal state in the Church, which served for the foundation of Novatian's error — the assumption, viz., which we have in the New Testament, with respect to the baptismal state, that it is a final and perfect one — upon which Novatian proceeded as if it were not an assumption but a fact, and so argued to the fall from it as if it were really a fall from a final state, and irrevocable.

3. I have shown, under the two preceding heads, that

the institution of baptism, both in the conditions and the unity connected with it, point to a final state, as distinguished from a merely preparatory one, as the state connected with it. But, while this supposition gives consistency to the institution of baptism, it is no less in harmony with the external form or rite. The baptismal rite represents a burial and a resurrection, a death unto sin, and a life unto righteousness: it represents a real and actual change, moral and spiritual, *in the individual admitted to it*, — his ascent from vice to virtue, from an earthly disposition to a heavenly one. I will add, that it even represents this change in the individual from sin to righteousness as a permanent and perfect one; for it represents it as a death unto sin, and there is no return from death; it represents it as a second life, and the second life is eternal. Nor must it be forgotten, for it is an important addition, that it represents this new state as a divine grace or gift, — a crowning privilege conferred by God upon those qualified by previous faith and conversion of heart for it; just as the admission of the individual to his real heavenly reward and the real life eternal — of which, indeed, this is but an anticipation — will be a grace or gift conferred by God on those worthy of it.

Now, if the baptismal state is a final one, really or by assumption, it carries out these symbols, and gives a meaning to the external rite. But if the baptismal state is only a preparatory one of assisting and enabling grace, how does it carry out those symbols and answer to the rite? A man has not left the life of sin and entered the life of righteousness, and changed from an earthly disposition to a heavenly one, because he has had the opportunity given him of doing so, or an assisting grace for that purpose. The possession of such a grace involves no actual goodness at all in the possessor, who may neglect and despise it, and, therefore, be all the worse for having it, instead of better. And, therefore, if the baptismal or regenerate state is to be considered as one of mere capacity for goodness and holiness, the only conclusion is

that there is no agreement between the symbol and that which it represents, between the grace and the rite.

Some persons will perhaps admit this disagreement, but offer a distinction to account for it. They will distinguish between baptism as a symbol, and baptism as a channel of grace; and maintain that, while baptism conveys a particular grace, it is not the symbol of that grace which it conveys, but of something else; that it gives one thing, typifies another—gives assistance to be righteous, typifies righteousness itself. But what discord and confusion is this? What an incongruous composition does it make of the sacrament of baptism, consisting of two parts which do not unite or correspond—an inward grace and an outward sign, but the outward sign not being a sign of the inward grace but of something else? Why should baptism be a sign at all, if it is not the sign of that grace which it really, or by supposition, gives. Why should the symbol neglect its natural function, and look away from its own correspondent reality? as if the reflection of an object in nature should not reflect its own object, but something else! Such a supposition, then, as this is absurd, and the symbol cannot in reason be divorced from the grace of baptism. But if the grace agrees with the symbol, it is evident that the grace of baptism is not a merely assisting, but a final grace.

Everything connected, then, with the institution of baptism,—first, the conditions, of which it requires the fulfilment in order to receive the benefit of it; secondly, the unity of the rite, or that it cannot be repeated; and, thirdly, the external form of the rite;—all these considerations, taken in connection too with the general position, practical and doctrinal, of the early Church with respect to the institution of baptism, the catechetical discipline of the early ages, and their doctrine of post-baptismal sin, even in its excesses and errors—all these considerations, I say, and this whole state of things with regard to baptism, point to a final grace or privilege, as distinguished from a merely

preparatory or assisting grace, as the grace of baptism,—that is, the grace really or hypothetically attached to that institution. Everything connected with baptism goes to exhibit the benefit and privilege attached to it as an end, a climax, not a mere means and preparation. But one answer may be made to this; for, admitting all that is here said about the grace of baptism being a climax or a final grace, it may still be said that such a grace is supplied in the forgiveness of sins connected with baptism; that the baptismal state has the finality wanted for it, in the relation of the sacrament to the *past*, though it has not got it in its relation to the future—that, though with respect to the future it is only a state of being assisted and enabled, with respect to the past it is a final state, involving an absolute and irrevocable pardon for all past sin. The climax which we desiderate in baptism, and to which the institution points, is thus, it may be said, obtained, and a reason supplied for the conditions of faith and repentance attached to baptism, which are natural ones to require for such a benefit as this absolute remission of past sin. Such an answer, however, as this, will not bear examination; and for this simple reason, that it is a mistake to suppose that the remission of sins in baptism is final, independently of the future life of the man, and therefore an error to think that we have in such remission of sin the desired final grace.

In the ordinary language of theology, we say that all past sin is remitted in baptism; and such language is sound and correct for ordinary purposes, and conveys the practical idea which is wanted. But if we want to state the truth on this subject with theological correctness, greater exactness is necessary. For this language of itself leaves the impression on the mind that particular sins are forgiven in baptism, apart from and independently of other sins of the same man, which may be forgiven or not by God, as may be; so that, whatever comes, past sin is at any rate cancelled, and future sins alone will be visited. Thus we say,

in the case of infant baptism, that original sin is certainly forgiven; and this leads to an idea that whatever life such an infant when grown up may lead, his original sin is at any rate pardoned, and that, if he is ultimately condemned, he will only be condemned for his actual, and not for his original sin. And thus we say, in the case of adult baptism, that all past sins are certainly forgiven; and this leads to an idea that, whatever the man may turn out eventually, his sins before baptism are at any rate forgiven, and that, if he is ultimately condemned, he will only be condemned for the sins which he committed after baptism. But such an idea as this is plainly erroneous.

For let us consider the case of human forgiveness, the nature of the act, what it is, and in what it consists. It is true we sometimes, in common parlance, forgive a man one injury he has done us, and do not forgive him another; but this is only when we forget one injury and remember another, or when one injury, if not forgotten as a fact, has yet ceased, by the action of time, to be felt as a sore, and is no longer a quick and living thing, while another is more recent, and so the mind is really alive to it. If we remember and feel both alike, we cannot, in the nature of the case, forgive a man one of these offences and not forgive him another. We cannot for this plain reason, that, if we forgive at all, we forgive not the wrongs themselves, but the man that did them. Forgiveness of injuries is a mere form of speech; for a person, not a fact or event, is the recipient of pardon. But if we forgive the man, we must forgive the whole man; for we cannot divide him in two.

And if this is the case in human forgiveness, much more is it the case in Divine. God does not forgive a man one sin, and not forgive him another. It is absurd to suppose that (to take the case of a baptized infant) God forgives him original sin in baptism, and continues to forgive it in spite of all subsequent sin in which the grown-up man may obstinately continue, nay, in spite of final impenitence, so that at the last

judgment He forgives him his original sin, and condemns him for his actual. And, in the same way, in the case of a baptized adult, it is absurd to suppose that, if he falls away, God continues to forgive him all his sins committed before baptism, and withholds forgiveness from his sins after baptism. Such a supposition would be unreasonable and unworthy of the Divine nature, and that for the reason stated, that, if God forgives at all, He forgives the man, and if He forgives the man, He forgives the whole man. According, then, as the man is forgiven, or the man is unforgiven, *all* his sins are forgiven, or *all* are counted against him. But the Divine no more than the human pardoner divides a man in two, and forgives him one sin while he condemns him for another.

The forgiveness of sins in baptism, then, is only final really at the day of final pardon, when the whole man is forgiven, and all his sins are forgiven with him. To the righteous at the last day God imputes no sin. But the same God forgives no sin of the wicked. From the original sin with which he was born, to the last sin he committed before he died, all without exception are imputed to him. The pardon of his original sin, if he was baptized as an infant, of all his past actual sins, if he was baptized as an adult, was only conditional,—dependent upon the life he afterwards led, and upon the account he would have to give of himself at the last day. Indeed, if he were condemned for his actual sin, what advantage would it be to him to be forgiven his original; or if he were condemned for his sins after baptism, what advantage would it be to him to be forgiven his sins before it?

The remission of sins, then, in baptism is in reality no final grace, but a conditional one, depending on the individual's future life and conduct; and therefore such remission of sin cannot be put forward as supplying that end and that climax which is wanted in the case of baptism, and to which all the characteristics of the institution point;—which end and climax, therefore, must be sought for in that final state which has been shown in this and the preceding chapter to

be the state connected, in however hypothetical a sense, with baptism; that state which the Apostle supposes all Christians to be in, whom he addresses as already having their conversation in heaven, and being citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, as being dead to sin and risen with Christ, and sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

And in this idea of the baptismal state, or regeneration, as being a climax and a final state, we have, to recur to a former observation, the distinction which is wanted between regeneration and conversion. Divines appear to have been often much perplexed to make out what the difference is between these two states, and which comes before the other; whether conversion precedes regeneration, or *vice versâ*. Some have decided — and the decision is evidently the more Scriptural one of the two—that conversion precedes regeneration, being the condition upon the fulfilment of which regeneration is bestowed; but the sense which they have attached to regeneration, as a merely assisting grace, has left them in a considerable difficulty what difference to make between such regeneration and the assisting grace which preceded it, and by means of which conversion itself was accomplished; and, after much elaborate effort, they have not been able to make out any real difference at all, though a show of verbal distinctions has in some measure covered or disguised the fruitlessness of their labour.[1] Others, again, have settled

[1] Waterland puts conversion or, as he terms it, *renewal*, in its Scriptural order, *before* regeneration. But, having done this, he is evidently much perplexed to make out any difference between renewal and regeneration. Regeneration, he says, "is a change from the state natural into the state spiritual; a translation from the curse of Adam into the grace of Christ." (vol. iv. p. 433.) But he admits, at the same time, that this grace has been had *before* regeneration,—that "man *under grace* prepares and qualifies himself *for* regeneration." Then what is the difference between regeneration and the state antecedent to it? He continues, "Regeneration is a kind of renewal; but then it is of the spiritual state considered *at large*; whereas renovation seems to mean a more particular kind of renewal, namely, of the inward frame or disposition of the man." (p. 433.) But what is meant by, or can any meaning whatever be given to, this distinction — a distinction between a man's spiritual state considered as "an inward disposition" and his spiritual state *considered at large?* And if any meaning can be given to such a distinction, is not the distinction plainly inapplicable in this particular case? for regenera-

that regeneration precedes conversion; and this arrangement has the advantage of enabling them to make that sufficient distinction between the two states which under the former was found impracticable. Regeneration is a new spiritual nature, in the sense of new spiritual powers and capacities, or, in other words, an assisting grace given or pledged to the man at baptism; conversion is the change of heart and life which the possession of this grace enables the individual, when grown up to maturity, to accomplish. But, while the arrangement of putting regeneration before conversion thus enables its adopters to make out a sufficient distinction between the two, the arrangement itself lies under the great disadvantage of being wholly opposed to Scripture, which quite clearly puts conversion before regeneration; faith and repentance, or change of heart, being evidently laid down in Scripture as the conditions of baptism, and therefore of regeneration, and consequently as necessarily preceding both.

The meaning, however, which in this and the preceding chapter has been affixed to regeneration, enables us to draw a sufficient distinction between regeneration and conversion, without altering the order in which the two stand to each other in Scripture. Conversion undoubtedly precedes regeneration, and is the condition and qualification for it; but conversion is only change for the time being, regeneration is

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tion is quite evidently described in Scripture as being, what Waterland says it is *not*, the "renewal of the inward frame and disposition." Waterland continues, — "Preventing grace must go before, to work in the man faith and repentance, which are qualifications previous to baptism, and necessary to render it salutary. These first addresses, or influential visits of the Holy Spirit, turning and preparing the heart of man, are the preparative renewings, the first and lowest degrees of renovation. Afterwards in baptism the same spirit fixes, as it were, his dwelling or residential abode, *renewing the heart in greater measure*." (p. 434.) Here then we have at last an intelligible attempt to distinguish between the previous grace which led to conversion, and the subsequent grace of regeneration; and it issues in a distinction of *degree*, that regeneration is renewal *in a greater measure* than the previous renewal or conversion. And of such a distinction as this it is enough to say that it is plainly an insufficient one, and does not carry out or respond to the idea of regeneration as a *new* state, a complete change of spiritual condition, — does not at all answer to the very meaning of the term regeneration itself as a *new birth* of the man.

this change made constant and eternal. The converted man, on being admitted to baptism and made regenerate, is supposed to have entered into a new state altogether, in which he is for ever removed from his former sins and corruptions, has put off the old man, and become a new creature, and a citizen of Heaven. As a converted man simply, he could change again, and fall away; but as regenerate he cannot change or fall. It is his very nature now to be holy and good, to love and serve God; he is a member of a heavenly society, and has left this lower world for "Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

CHAP. III.

ON THE HYPOTHETICAL FORM, OR THE RULE OF SUPPOSITION, AS APPLIED TO THE CHARACTERS OF MEN IN THEIR SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS RELATIONS.

THE doctrine of baptismal regeneration depends, first, on the sense of Regeneration, and, next, on the mode in which this regeneration is connected with baptism. I have been hitherto occupied in deciding the former question, viz. the sense of the term; and I have endeavoured to show, first from the Scriptural and patristic language bearing on the subject, and secondly from the rite and institution of baptism, what the true meaning of regeneration is, viz. that it is goodness and righteousness, actual and final.

But the sense of the term is the turning point of this inquiry; which being decided, the mode in which such regeneration is connected with baptism follows immediately. Nor is it necessary for this purpose to insist on the sense of regeneration as final goodness; it is enough if it has been ascertained to be goodness actual, and not the mere capacity for it. For we cannot in common reason maintain that all baptized persons are actually good and holy men; and therefore, if they are considered to be so, they can only by possibility be considered to be so hypothetically. It can only be a high supposition which is made respecting all who have been baptized and admitted into the Church and Body of Christ. And this has been often stated in the course of the two last chapters, so that I am conscious of having already forestalled my conclusion, and decided already what it properly belonged to this chapter to decide. But it was impossible practically to keep wholly separate, in the argument, the

sense of regeneration, and the hypothetical mode in which it is asserted and attributed. I come, however, now, in the present chapter, to consider this point more completely and fully, and to lay before the reader, with as much explanation as I can bestow, the hypothetical mode in which regeneration is asserted of all baptized persons. For, though I have nothing to add to the substance of the argument as already stated, viz. that regeneration is actual goodness, and that in this sense it can only by possibility be asserted of all the baptized hypothetically—though I have nothing, I say, to add to the substance of this argument, I am yet unwilling to leave such a conclusion thus barely stated; and therefore the present chapter shall be devoted to some reflections on the general use of the hypothetical form, or the rule of supposition, as applied to the characters of men in their social, political, and religious relations. It will thus be seen how wide and general has been the use of this form in the world, how naturally men have resorted to it, how it has been applied alike to individuals and to bodies, used alike in poetry and common life, and, lastly, been recognised and adopted by Holy Scripture, and assigned a large, a pervading, and a familiar place in the language both of the Old and New Testaments.

The rule of supposition, or of supposing men to be what they ought to be, is one of the common forms of social life. When we meet a person about whom we know nothing either good or bad, the course is certainly open to us of keeping close to simple matter of fact, and addressing him in accordance with this ignorance and uncertainty about him. But this is not the line which society prescribes. The established rule is to suppose persons to be good and virtuous, and address and behave to them on that supposition. In conversation we suppose in them all the feelings, the principles, the conduct of good men, and expect, as a matter of course, certain sympathies and judgments from them. And even when we may know evil about them, unless the notice of

such evil falls by some special call to us, we have still to maintain in our address to them the formal supposition that they are good. This is the fundamental rule of courtesy which pervades the whole of social life, and upon which an almost infinite number of forms of speech, phrases, and pieces of etiquette and attention have been raised. One simple rule has developed into a whole social ceremonial code and system. And in public life men both use this rule towards others, and take advantage of it in their own case. Statesmen, and those who conduct public affairs, are supposed in all common forms of address, unless there is any special call to notice the contrary, to be disinterested and patriotic, serving their country, not from any love of personal distinction, but from the desire to do good; and they speak of themselves in this way, some sincerely and conscientiously, others because they know that they have a right, by a law of society, to the supposition.

But the rule of supposition, as applied to individuals, is a rule of courtesy rather than of feeling; as applied to bodies, it partakes of feeling, and often becomes a warm sentiment, and even a deep enthusiasm. Strictly speaking, character does not belong to bodies as such, but only to individuals; by a law of the imagination, however, we are able to, and we habitually do, attribute character to bodies; form a certain idea and impression of them, which we carry about with us in our minds, and which makes the body of which we entertain it an object of our affections. A natural tie of common blood or local boundary binds the nation and tribe; an artificial one gives unity to the guild, corporation, university, and such institutions; but both kinds of bodies are susceptible of a character, can excite affections and form a moral object before our minds. We know well enough, as a matter of fact, that the whole of the body is not really what we suppose it to be in the grand or fascinating image of it that we raise in our minds; but yet we suppose it to be what we picture it. We form a high supposition about it; and ac-

cording to that supposition we think and speak of the whole society as being noble, virtuous, brave, honourable, and the like.

And the reason, why this supposition is made with so much greater feeling in the case of bodies than it is in the case of individuals, appears to be this, that in bodies there is, however partial a one, a ground of fact on which the supposition is reared. Every large body of men, whether united by a natural tie or an artificial, contains men of real virtues and high qualities, who make themselves prominent in the history of the society. The character, then, of these individuals is by a law of the imagination extended to the whole body. There is a principle of *imputation* which enters into the supposition about bodies, which does not enter into that about individuals: the few are noble and good in themselves; and the body to which they belong is allowed a participation in their character by a kind of reflection—it is seen in their light, and shines with a vicarious virtue. There is another difference between individuals and bodies, that bodies or masses of men act with a certain nobility and virtue on particular occasions by the force of sympathy. Men in masses are open to appeals made to their common moral nature, and act nobly, sometimes, because they act together, and under each other's eye and influence. The consciousness of united action brings out men's better feelings; and the large and open impulses of human nature draw men, superseding for the time the private and selfish ones. Thus, at particular junctures and emergencies, bodies act with a devotion and strong sentiment which pervades the whole society, and penetrates to every individual of it; and these compose to a considerable extent the great events in the history of races and institutions. What we call the great events are often those occasions which draw out this general devotion, and create for the time this universal virtue in the body. Great *men*, then, and great *events*, compose a foundation of fact upon which the form of supposition, in the case of bodies, partially rests.

There are some great men, and their virtues are imputed to the society; the whole society appears to exhibit virtue on particular occasions, and that virtue is supposed to be in it always. And thus an image is formed of a great, a virtuous, a noble society, which appeals to the affection, the pride, and the enthusiasm of its members.

Let us take as an illustration of this mental process with respect to bodies of men, the feeling of the ancient bard with regard to his nation or tribe. It was the function of the bard to glorify the nation or tribe to which he belonged in verse or song; but, in order to do this, he had himself to form and to produce in his own mind the highest conception of it. And how did he do this? By the process which has been just mentioned. The tribe that, travelling slowly from its northern or eastern birthplace, had traversed half the globe, or that had lived immemorially within the circle of native rocks and mountains, presented to his mind an origin lost in the mystery of remote time. But, as it gradually emerged out of the unknown, it revealed the characteristics of national life in the shape of remarkable men and remarkable events. As his eye ranged over the past, the image of one hero after another rose up before him, who had led his tribe on to conquest, or had headed it against assault, and had signalised himself by heroic courage, ardour, and devotion. Again, event after event rose up before his mind; remarkable occasions and junctures, which had called forth and brought into action the spirit of the whole body, presenting unanimous and inspiring displays of zeal and self-sacrifice, where the people acted as one man, and every one appeared to be a hero. Here, then, was a twofold basis of imputation; he extended the heroism of the great men to the whole body; he extended the heroism of the whole body at particular junctures to the body always. Thus, in proportion to the rapidity with the men and the events followed each other in his imagination, the average character of his tribe or nation became absorbed in the high specimens of it, its ordinary

life in its great events; till, as each succeeding instance confirmed and enforced its predecessor, and the extraordinary manifestations became more and more prominent in his view, to the exclusion of the intervals between them, the whole life of the nation seemed ultimately one heroic energy, and the mind of the bard was raised to the highest pitch of admiration and enthusiasm. His nation became a glorious object,—an impersonation of noble and sublime virtue, which gratified and satisfied the high instincts of his nature. In this state of mind he performed his appropriate function, and communicated his own conception and impression to others. The image he raised lodged itself in every breast, kindling love and enthusiasm; and the nation appeared to every individual member of it a sublime object, to which all devotion was due, and for which the individual ought to live and die. It is true, his moral standard, which was the heroic, was a defective one,—the standard of a rude and uninstructed age, in which the vital flame in human nature wasted itself in action for action sake. But, according to the standard of his day, his nation figured as an impersonation of virtue; which virtue it reflected on all its members. As connected with the body, all the individuals were heroes in his eyes.

There is, then, a certain rule of supposition, such as that which has been described; an established and recognised form, which prevails in society, and pervades the intercourse of man with man, which is the foundation of numberless details of behaviour in private and public life, and moulds the whole system of common manners; a form, again, which is applied to bodies of men, to nations, to institutions, and applied with a strong sentiment and feeling. And with this introduction we come to the examination of the language of Scripture respecting that body called the Church, and the individual members of it considered as members of that body.

Let us take first the language of the Old Testament. Under the old dispensation the Church was confined to a

particular people, and one body was at once a nation and a Church. How, then, is the Jewish nation spoken of in the Old Testament? It is constantly spoken of as a holy nation, a chosen people, beloved of God, and precious in His sight; as a nation of saints and righteous men, soldiers, servants, and prophets of the Most High. Of them it was said, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm;" and of them at the very outset of their career were spoken these remarkable and magnificent words: "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went forth a fiery law for them. Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. . . . The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee. . . . Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." [1]

The prophetical books, however, are the special repositories of this kind of language, and a large part of prophecy is occupied in glorifying the Jewish people, and raising a sublime and splendid image of collective and national sanctity. This was indeed a prominent part of the very function of the prophet, and the commission which he had to discharge. He had to exalt, to glorify his nation, as the holy people, the chosen of God. And of the prophets Isaiah is the foremost in fulfilling this office; he is indeed filled to overflowing with the sense of the spiritual greatness and excellence of the chosen race, their favour with God, and their high prospects and destiny. They shine in his prophecies with the beams of the Ineffable Love, and they ascend from glory to glory, till they

[1] Deut. xxxiii. 27, 29

arrive at a state where no eye can follow them, lost and disappearing in the distant brightness of a transcendent vision which the prophet could only gaze at and could not penetrate.

First, the Jewish people are described as the people of God, and the servants of God; and, in accordance with this character, as being the objects of divine love, — a love which is expressed by the tenderest appeals of God to them, affectionate expostulations, merciful warnings, kind encouragements, illustrated by analogies of the deepest and strongest kind of human love. "Thou, Israel, art My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art My servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.[1] . . . . I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee; fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."[2] "But now saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel; Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."[3] Time after time is the same note of encouragement repeated, the sign that the people to whom it is addressed are the object of a divine paternal love, expressing itself in the same inspiriting and cheering calls in which human parental affection is expressed: "Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant, and Israel whom I

[1] Isa. xli. 8—10. [2] Isa. xli. 13, 14. [3] Isa. xliii. 1. 2

have chosen. Thus saith the Lord that made thee and formed thee from the womb; Fear not, O Jacob my servant, and thou Jeshurun whom I have chosen. . . . . Thou art My servant; I have formed thee; thou shalt not be forgotten of Me.[1] . . . Even to your old age I am He, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made and I will bear; even I will carry and deliver you[2] . . . Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet I will not forget thee. Behold I have engraven thee on the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me."[3]

But not only is the Jewish people described as the holy people and as collectively the servant of God, and peculiar object of His love, but this very state, which was so much an advance upon that of any other nation in the world, was spoken of as itself only introductory to a still higher and more perfect state, to which the Jewish race was ultimately to rise. The nation at present, though described as "the righteous nation," and God's servant, exhibited much alloy, and its service was but a frail and imperfect one, distorted by a headstrong self-will, and debased by constant defections and sins, especially that of idolatry. They departed largely from their own peculiar law and light, and adopted the morals and the religion of the heathen world. And accordingly those very pages of prophecy which represent the nation so strongly as the righteous nation, the people of God, and the object of His love, abound with the sternest rebukes and denunciations of its sins, for which they threaten certain punishment — a threat of which the captivities were the fulfilment. The prophets represent the people as on the one side the object of Divine love, so on the other as the object of Divine wrath; not indeed that these two contradictories attached to the nation in the same sense and equally, but that, just as one who is on the whole a good man and a saint, like David,

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[1] Isa. xliv. 1, 2. 21. [2] Isa. xlvi. 4. [3] Isa. xlix. 15, 16.

may commit great sins, and bring on himself severe punishment, so the Jewish nation, which was on the whole God's servant, was still at the same time also a sinner, and the object of Divine vengeance. The Jewish nation was sinful in no other sense than that in which a good man might be: in that sense, however, it was sinful. Up to this point, then, the righteousness of the Jewish people is a mixed, defective, and debased one; and the Jews so far figure in the prophetical books as the holy people in an inferior and imperfect sense. But this state of things was not to last; it was but a preliminary and an early stage in their career, and a brighter day was approaching. The prophet saw in the distance an era, the characteristics of which, if they belonged to any state of things in this world, could only exist in a world much altered and marvellously renovated and improved, — an era when the whole nation would obey consistently and perfectly the law of God, no longer submitting to it as an external yoke, but having it written in their hearts, and following it as their own choice and inclination. This wonderful change was to take place by the influence of a great King who was to rise up amongst them; who, by the force of His character and example, by persuasion, by animating and inspiring exhortations as their Leader and Champion, and, lastly, by a Divine power which belonged to Him, would raise in the nation one universal celestial enthusiasm, lodging His image in all breasts and communicating His own virtue to them; kindling in them the love of holiness, and directing the hearts of the people, as the heart of one man, to God as their final rest and object of desire. So great a moral event was to have consequences proportionably great. Such a nation under such a head must convert the whole heathen world to God; for how could such a collective example and the force of such united virtue be resisted? Jerusalem would thus be the head of a converted and renewed world, and all nations would flow into her as their spiritual centre, acknowledging her as their teacher, enlightener, and guide; and repaying the inexpressible bene-

fits received at her hands by humble and grateful deference. Such, after the preparatory chastisements of captivity and dispersion, would be the ultimate triumph of the holy people, conquering, under their Messiah, all the nations of the earth, not for a selfish and private, but for a spiritual end: riding victoriously over falsehood and vice, overthrowing idolatry, and bringing mankind to the light of virtue and truth. Such a moral renovation of the world again would issue in universal peace and happiness. Man would no longer be the enemy of man; strife and confusion would cease, and all hearts meet in communion and love; the curse would be rescinded; paradise would return, never to be forfeited and lost again; and the world would, under the Messiah and righteous Prince, enjoy a glorious and eternal repose.

The following passages in Scripture will exemplify the successive stages of this progress of the Jewish nation. Jeremiah, after foretelling their captivity and dispersion, thus describes their restoration and the new spiritual state which will accompany it: "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them[1];" "and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me for ever; and I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me[2];" and Israel "shall be to Me a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth."[3] Ezekiel repeats the prophecy: "Thus saith the Lord God, I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. . . . . And I will give them one heart, and I will

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[1] Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. [2] Jer. xxxii. 39. [3] Jer. xxxiii. 9.

put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh: that they may walk in My statutes, and keep Mine ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."[1] "For in Mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, shall all the house of Israel serve Me. And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; and I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes[2]:" "neither will I hide My face any more from them; for I have poured out My spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."[3] "Behold," says God, speaking by the mouth of Isaiah, "I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."[4] And the ultimate effect of this national chastisement is national perfection. "Thy people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever[5]:" "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified[6]:" "I will place salvation in Zion for Israel My glory."[7]

And this national perfection was to be brought about by a great King and Prophet that was to arise, a true Shepherd, who, not neglecting the spiritual welfare of the flock, as the false shepherds had done before, should feed them with sublime doctrine, inspire them with holy ardour, and elicit all the latent strength of their moral nature. "I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God: I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; I will feed them with judgment. I will save My flock, and they shall be no more a prey. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed

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[1] Ezek. xi. 17. 19.
[2] Ezek. xx. 40., xxxvi. 25.
[3] Ezek. xxxix. 29.
[4] Isa. xlviii. 10.
[5] Isa. lx. 21.
[6] Isa. xlv. 25.
[7] Isa. xlvi. 13.

them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd: and I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them."[1] "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness."[2] "There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse," says Isaiah, "and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."[3] "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."[4]

Such was to be the restoration of the Jewish nation under the Messiah, a restoration accomplished with exultation and triumph; with "the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride[5];" an highway was laid by which the ransomed of the Lord returned to Zion; and it was called the way of holiness; the gates were opened, and the righteous nation entered the city with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.[6]

And now came the *effect* of this manifestation upon the world; the result of this marvellous national sanctity being that other nations were drawn to it, and so converted ultimately to the true faith and the knowledge of God. The

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[1] Ezek. xxxiv. 14, 15, 16. 22, 23, 24.
[2] Jer. xxiii. 5.
[3] Isa. xi. 1, 2.
[4] Isa. ix. 6, 7.
[5] Jer. xxxiii. 11.
[6] Isa. xxxv. 8. 11.

glory of the Lord was now revealed, and all flesh saw it. Prophecy now adopts a bolder strain, and addresses re-established Zion: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising; the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee; the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls; thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut, day or night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. The nation or kingdom that shall not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The glory also of Lebanon shall come unto thee; and I will make the place of My feet glorious. The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel."[1] The holy city, long desolate and forlorn during the captivity and dispersion of her sons, is now told to prepare for receiving, together with her sons, all the surrounding world. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing thou that didst not travail with child, for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of their habitation: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles."[2]

Lastly and finally, the Jewish race, under its Messiah, thus reigning over a converted world; a universal righteousness brings in universal peace and happiness, and prophecy closes with a vision of paradise restored, and an eternal dominion of justice and love. "Violence shall no more be heard within thy land, wasting nor destruction within

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[1] Isa. lx. 1, 2. 5. 10—14. [2] Isa. liv. 1, 2, 3.

thy borders[1];" "they shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid; and the calf and the lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."[2] "And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things; and He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory, and will wipe away tears from all faces."[3] The sun shall no more be thy light by day, neither the moon by night; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."[4] For "He shall create a new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered."[5]

Such was the vision of the prophet; and up to a certain point the contents of it belong to the order of nature: it displays scenes and events, which, however magnificent and sublime, belong to this earth, and are of the same general type with others which history has recorded. Great movements of thought, great exhibitions of power, great revolutions political and moral accomplished by single minds, the hearts of whole nations bowed by one man, empires established, religions spread,—these are events which have taken place, and will take place again, at recurring epochs, when it may please the Sovereign Will to permit them. So far, then, as the prophetic vision describes only the reign of the Messiah, who, as a mighty prince and leader, establishes a new order of things, moral and religious, in the world, gathering all nations under him, and attaching them as spiritual tributaries to the Holy City,—so far it only describes events which belong to this visible order of things. This part of the prophetic vision, then, belongs to this earth; and we know its

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[1] Isa. lx. 18.
[2] Isa. xi. 6.
[3] Isa. xxv. 6, 7, 8.
[4] Isa. lx. 19.
[5] Isa. lxv. 17.

place; we know *where* these great events and wonderful movements will arise. But what is the place of that portion of the vision which follows, and which consummates the whole? Where is situated that scene of final peace? Where are those fields on which the prophet saw the wolf dwelling with the lamb, the leopard lying down with the kid, and the little child leading the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; where was there the den of the harmless cockatrice, the hole of the asp on which the weaned child played? Where was that sky of which the sun no more went down, neither the moon withdrew itself, but which enjoyed everlasting light? The place of this realm of innocence, purity, and love, the prophet defines not. His eye rested on a scene which was without outline or limits; in which nature was supernatural, and the solid earth melted into a spiritual picture. He saw in the distance a new morning of the creation, and new birth of the world, long expected, long prophesied and desired, as the steps of generation after generation advanced towards it. But was this scene in earth, or heaven, or midway between? All the images employed in the description of it attach it to the earth. There was animal and vegetable life in it; the beauty of earth and sky; trees grew in it, rivers flowed; the air gave freshness, the sun warmth. But, if it was earth, it was earth so renewed and spiritualised that we do not know it again. And just as men returning after a long interval to the place of their birth, where they find all things changed, begin almost to doubt its being the same place; even the simplest person saying to himself, is this indeed the place, or am I somewhere else? So in this renovated earth in which the prophet places us, we ask ourselves, is this earth, or is it heaven? Our idea of place wavers: the impalpable link is gone; and a world which has passed through the transforming medium of prophecy is another world. Thus a paradise opens the Bible history, a paradise closes it. But the future paradise wants the definite characteristics of time and place which

belonged to the first. The first had succession of time, and divisions of time: it had morning and evening, day and night: it began and it ended. The first had definite situation, and out of it flowed the four rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates, which watered the regions of the east and south. In the second paradise, place is dissolved and time is stationary. Now we are in a scene which is of earth and not of earth, which is everywhere and which is nowhere. Now seasons and revolutions are over; sun and moon no longer perform their orbits; there is no more morning and evening, day and night: all is at rest, as in a picture, no change, and no decay; for time which moves not ends not; its action is mortality, but its repose is everlasting life.

Nor, contemplated in this light is the paradise of the Old Testament saint so different from the heaven of the new, as regards the principle of representation on which it is based. The future state of the New Testament rests on a different department and field of imagery from that on which the future state of the Old does: but they both rest alike upon images in themselves simply material; and the representation in both cases borrows from the physical world, and uses natural objects and associations for the illustration of spiritual things. The place of the Christian future state is the sky, as the place of the Jewish is earth. But earth and sky are alike material, and the one has no more connexion in itself with the spiritual world than the other. We point upwards, when we want to express that we aspire to that world which is reserved for the righteous after death; that *higher* world, as we call it. But what is there in that immeasurable upper region of space itself, which is at all more allied to the spiritual than lower earth? Could we ascend for ever into the sky above our heads, what should we go through, but vast desert tracts of space, occupied at intervals by huge masses of matter, either resting or rolling round and round their respective centres? The heathen thus placed his paradise below, the Jew upon, the Christian above, the earth; but

below, upon, above, all is alike no more than space and matter. Below are the bowels of the earth, ores, stones, and metals; upon the surface is her vegetation and animal life; above is an infinite world of solid globes. But nowhere in this universe of matter is found the spiritual and heavenly. Nor can one department of association wholly do without the aid of another. The Christian heaven is in the sky, and has the sublimity which that image gives; but it has also the wealth, vegetation, and natural objects of this lower world, gold, jasper, emerald, and all precious stones, the pure river clear as crystal, "the tree of which the leaves are for the healing of the nations."

Now it is evident that this whole prophetical account of the Jewish nation, as a righteous nation, the holy people, the servant of God, of its progress and ultimate glory and triumph, proceeds upon a supposition. The prophet well knew that in matter of fact the whole Jewish nation was not righteous, holy, or God's servant; but that it was an aggregate of individuals, some good men, and others bad, some who were, and others who were not, of the character assigned by him to the whole. He well knew that the whole Jewish nation would not be ultimately triumphant, arrive at a state of final perfection, happiness, and glory, and from this sublime position rule over a renewed and spiritualised world. He knew that only the holy and virtuous portion of the nation could ultimately receive such a reward and such a supremacy; that they alone would be saved, and would be kings and priests for evermore. When he spoke then of the nation as righteous, of the nation as ultimately attaining this triumphant position, he spoke on a supposition. He first assumed the holiness of the nation; then he regarded all the individual members of it as, by virtue of such membership, holy men. The Jew was, as such, a saint in his eyes. He passed over the individual, and only saw the member of a chosen race, one of a divine society, the band of the elect, the Church of the Most High.

And if we examine in what way this supposition is formed in the prophet's mind about the whole nation, the process appears to be very much of the kind which was explained above. There was a partial basis of fact, which a holy imagination took up and extended farther; a basis, supplied in the occasional behaviour of the whole body, and in the sanctity and virtue of some individual members of it. The behaviour of the whole people upon some occasions is commended in Scripture, when the whole body appears to have displayed a unanimous trust and obedience. Thus the exodus, the journey in the wilderness, the conquest of the Canaanites, are alluded to as exhibitions of faith and holy courage on the part of the whole nation; when, though even then with some drawbacks, a sacred enthusiasm raised them for the time above their ordinary level, and made them the willing executors of the Divine command and prompt followers of their inspired leaders. The departure of the whole people from Egypt, involving as it did the recognition of Moses as God's delegate, and a throwing of themselves at his direction upon an unknown future, was a national act of high religious spirit, and is so spoken of in Scripture. "By faith, we are told, they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned."[1] And as the popular faith, which triumphed over material nature, is praised, so is the popular gratitude for the triumph. "Then believed they his words, and they sang his praise."[2] "Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses."[3] The subsequent wanderings of the people are referred to in the same way as a proof of faith. "I remember thee, it is said, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord."[4] The Canaanitish conquests were

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[1] Heb. xi. 29.
[2] Ps. cvi. 12.
[3] Exod. xiv. 31.
[4] Jer. ii. 2.

attributed to the same faith; for it was by faith, we are told, that the walls of Jericho fell down; and the courage displayed generally in these wars is spoken of as an inspired one.

But, while the national exhibitions of faith appear to supply part of the ground on which the general supposition and representation of the whole nation as a holy and righteous nation is formed, the principal and most prominent ground by far is the remarkable character of some individuals of it, especially the singular faith and holiness of those great patriarchs and founders of the nation, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Jewish nation is throughout Scripture said to be beloved for the fathers' sake. It lives in the perpetual light and glory of those great names, and is sustained by one continual imputation, making it the partaker and reflexion of the righteousness of its progenitors. God sees it through that medium, and forgets in the faith and constancy of the fathers the wilfulness, inconsistencies, and disobedience of the children. Thus as the eye of the prophet surveyed his whole nation, as he called up its past, and put before him its progress and career,—he saw some great religious acts done by the nation, and some great religious men who were its founders and exemplars, and He contemplated the whole nation in the light of those acts, and those men. The righteousness, especially of its great saints, pervaded the whole nation as He saw it; it shone with a vicarious sanctity and splendour, and all its members were as such saints in His eye. All were soldiers of God, fighting as of old His battles against the infidel and the scorner; and all were sons of Abraham and the patriarchs. And thus He formed the image of a holy, a righteous nation, which shone forth from amidst the darkness and corruption of the world, and was destined to advance to the highest spiritual position and glory. There was a ground of imputation, it must be added, in the future as well as in the past. The Messiah, or righteous Prince, who was to establish the eternal reign of

justice in the world, was to rise from the Jewish stock, and from Him the whole nation derived a reflected righteousness.

But, however we may explain the process by which it was formed, a supposition was certainly formed by the prophets about the Jewish people, for they represented the whole nation as righteous, when, in fact, only a certain portion of it was.

Two objections, indeed, may be raised to this conclusion of a great prophetical supposition made respecting the Jewish nation. It may be said, first, that these prophecies do not apply to that nation, but to the Christian Church, of which that nation was the figure and type. But, even supposing this to have been the application in the prophet's mind, what difference does it make in the argument? It is evident that the Christian Church comes under exactly the same observation that was made about the Jewish nation, viz., that the whole of it is not righteous, but only a portion; and therefore that the whole body can only be spoken of as righteous by a supposition. In which case nothing is gained by transferring the application of these prophecies from the Jewish nation to the Church. The same supposition is made in either case; only in the one case it is made of the Jewish nation, in other of the Christian Church. But the truth is, we are not concerned here with the Prophet's meaning at all, but with his language. The Prophet may have *meant* the Christian Church; he may have *meant*, and doubtless only did mean under the term Jewish nation, the righteous *individuals* in the Jewish nation, or whatever body it was which was signified under that name. But he does not *say* this. What he says is that the Jewish nation is holy, that the Jewish nation is righteous, and that the Jewish nation shall enter into that final state which he describes. In saying this he makes a supposition. For he represents the nation as holy, righteous, and blessed, when he knows that only certain individuals in it are so.

Again, it may be said, that when the Jewish people were

called in the Old Testament an elect and holy people, that such terms only mean that they were chosen for admission to the enjoyment of certain religious privileges and peculiar advantages from which the rest of the world were excluded; that they had the light of a revelation, and lived under laws and ordinances of Divine institution, which were a great aid to a holy life: or that the nation was holy, as an instrument which is consecrated to a holy end and purpose, the system under which they were placed being designed to prepare the way for the advent of the Messiah and Christianity. But such meanings as these appear to fall very short of the natural meaning of these and other terms constantly applied in the Old Testament to the Jewish nation. When the prophets put before us a glowing image of a holy, elect, and righteous people, the servants and soldiers of the Most High, can we, on any natural principles of interpretation, explain such language simply to mean that the people enjoyed peculiar religious opportunities, and the light of superior knowledge? This is an interpretation indeed not uncommonly held, but is it one which we should give in any analogous case in ordinary poetry? When the bard of ancient times glorified his nation in verse, as a nation of heroes, did he mean only that they were all endowed with certain powers of mind and body, which, if properly cultivated and developed, would produce a courageous and heroic disposition? Rather was he not at the time looking on them as heroes really and actually? Was not the image or picture of them in his mind, however based upon supposition only, still the image of them as heroes *in fact?* And so, when the prophet of the Old Testament glorifies his nation as a holy nation, did he mean only that they had certain valuable opportunities and aids to holiness? No; the image of it in his mind, was that of a nation of men really holy. It was a supposition indeed, but the supposition of holiness in fact, not only of the opportunity for it. His moral standard differed indeed from that of the ancient bard,

and the holy man, and not the hero, was his exemplar. But he contemplated his nation, no less than the bard did, as impersonating a standard.

Such an explanation, moreover, breaks down as soon as ever we examine the particulars of this kind of language. Thus, as the prophets speak of the holy, so they also speak of the sinful people; and the whole nation is threatened with the Divine judgment for its disobedience. But the sinfulness of the nation means certainly its sinfulness in fact; and a national judgment follows accordingly. The holiness of the nation then must be understood in the same sense as holiness in fact. Still less does such an explanation of holiness, as that offered above, stand the test of the closing scene of prophecy. There a state of things is described far surpassing the enjoyment of religious means and opportunities: preparatory dispensations are over, and a nation actually and finally holy has entered on its triumphant and eternal rest. Here, then, the holiness of the nation must undoubtedly mean its holiness in fact: no other sense can possibly be given to it. And this being the case, its holiness in the previous stage must mean the same; for it is the same holiness in substance which is spoken of throughout, only in the one stage an imperfect and defective, in the other a perfect and transcendent holiness.

We come now to the language of the New Testament respecting the Church, and the individual members of it considered as members of that body. The New Testament, as is evident upon the very surface, takes up the language of the Old on this subject, and speaks of the Church or Christian congregation as holy, and of all its members as saints. The Christian congregation is "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," "the household of God," "the body of Christ," an holy temple of which Jesus Christ is the corner stone The individual members of this congregation are called the saints, the faithful, the holy brethren, the elect, the predestinated, children of God, heirs

of God and joint heirs with Christ, heirs of the kingdom, heirs of salvation. St. Paul writes "to all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called saints," "to the saints at Ephesus," "to the saints at Philippi," "to the saints at Colosse:" he goes to Jerusalem "to minister to the saints;" he enjoins "supplications for the saints," "distributing to the necessity of the saints," "contributions and collections for the poor saints," "washing the feet of the saints;" he "salutes the saints," and prays that his "service may be accepted of the saints."

But not only are the Christian Church and all its members described as holy, but that holiness is represented as a fixed and perfect one. The Apostle is evidently speaking of the existing Church when he says that "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water and the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish."[1] He is speaking of the existing Church when he says, "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."[2] He is speaking of and to the individual members of the existing Church when he describes and addresses men who are dead to the world, and risen with Christ, who sit in heavenly places with Christ, who have their conversation in heaven, who are born of God, and therefore cannot sin; who are dead to sin, and therefore cannot live any longer therein. The Christian Church is represented as a perfect and triumphant society, and its individual members as holy, just, and righteous men; nay, as

[1] Eph. v. 27. [2] Heb. xii. 22.

raised far above a struggling and preparatory holiness, as removed from the power and insensible to the pleasures of sin. But I will not here insist on this latter point, but only on the fact that the Apostle addresses all Christians as holy, good, and righteous men.

Now it is quite certain, and common sense sufficiently informs us, that all the individual members of the Christian Churches, to whom the Apostle wrote, were not good and holy men. When the Apostle therefore addresses them as such, it is quite evident that he asserts it hypothetically of them, and does not mean his assertion to be understood as matter of fact.

Will it be said of this language, as it was in the case of the same kind of language applied to the Jewish Church, that it expresses privileges and means of grace, not actual holiness? I give the same reply that I gave then, that to interpret it so is to explain it away, and give it a meaning altogether different from its natural one. When an orator addresses an assembly or crowd before him, as all honourable men, would any reasonable person imagine that by the term honourable he meant that they were all endowed with an original sense of right and wrong, a due attention to which would keep them from mean and base actions? Or when a man in society addresses his next neighbour, whom he never saw before in his life, as an upright man, or implies in his general tone that he regards him as such, does he mean by uprightness the possession simply of a moral nature which gives to his next neighbour, as it gives to all the rest of the world, the power to act uprightly? It is plain that what is meant in the address oratorical, in the converse social, is the crowd's actual honourableness, the individual's actual uprightness; that that is the *meaning* of, whatever may be the explanation as to the *application* of, these epithets. It would be ridiculous to suppose, in either of these cases, that the mere capacity for such dispositions was meant; and for this simple reason, that there is no language in the world in

which goodness has ever meant the mere opportunity to be good,—a meaning of goodness according to which wicked men would be good men, and the worst of men as good as the best.

In the same way, when we come to the terms "saint," "faithful," and the like applied, in the way which has been observed in the New Testament, how are we justified in saying that "saint" means a man who has certain opportunities for living a holy life, and "faithful" one who has the power to attain faith? "Saint" can mean nothing else but a man who *is* holy, and "faithful" a man who *does* believe; and to give to either term the other meaning here proposed, is simply to say that, in the language of the Bible, wicked men may be good men, ungodly men holy men, and infidels believers; for undoubtedly the wicked, the ungodly, and the unbelieving have the *power* to attain the contrary dispositions, — and it is their own fault if they do not. No reader would naturally give such a meaning to these words; if he does so, it is only because he comes to the Bible with an artificial interpretation in his head, got from some authorised comment belonging to the religious school in which he happens to have been brought up.

Will it be replied that, anyhow, these statements of Scripture must be explained in some way contrary to their grammatical meaning; that one who explains them as *hypothetical* is open to this charge, because, grammatically, they assert a fact; and that, therefore, neither of these interpretations can triumph over the other as being a simple, plain, and natural interpretation? I answer, that there is all the difference, in respect of interpretative naturalness, between the interpretation which makes these *statements* hypothetical, and that which gives the meaning, now objected to, to the *terms* or words employed in these statements. The interpretation which makes these statements hypothetical is guilty of no interference with the natural

meaning of words: saint means saint, according to it, and faithful, faithful. What it interferes with is not the meaning, but simply the *application*, of these terms. It asserts a particular *mode* in which these terms are applied to the persons to whom they are applied in Scripture, viz. the hypothetical one; and, in asserting this, it only says that Scripture uses a form which has, as a matter of fact, been in universal and constant use in the world, and which we find prevailing alike in poetry and common life, in society public and private. Is there anything unnatural in supposing that Scripture should adopt a form of universal use among mankind? The surprise would rather be if it did not. On the other hand, the interpretation objected to positively and flagrantly violates the plain meaning of plain words.

The terms elect and predestinated are explained in the same way to mean elect and predestinated to certain privileges, certain valuable opportunities. The Jewish was the elect people because it was chosen out of the families of the earth to the advantage of a written revelation; the Christians were elect because they were chosen to the advantage of a still higher revelation. All this is very true, and doubtless Jews and Christians were elected to these privileges. But it is surprising that writers, and those thoughtful and ingenious ones, do not see that such a meaning, while it is undoubtedly *included* in, does not by any means *fulfil* and come up to the natural sense of these terms as used in Scripture. We are told there, as plainly as language can tell us, that the predestinated are predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, *i. e.* to actual righteousness, not the mere improved opportunity of attaining such righteousness; and that they are "ordained to eternal life." Predestination, then, in the New Testament evidently means predestination to eternal happiness, and to actual holiness as the qualification for it. And the Apostle speaks of all Christians as being thus predestinated and elect, because he assumes that

they have been; because for the time he will not contemplate the Christian Church in any other light than that of a pure band of elect souls, ordained from all eternity to future happiness, and now in this mortal life undergoing the necessary transforming process for this end under the hand of the Almighty Fashioner. Nor does the Old Testament Prophet, when he contemplates the Jews as the elect people, regard them as elect to certain valuable opportunities simply. No; but as elect to glory, ordained to that great final triumph, and everlasting spiritual kingdom over the nations of the earth, which composed the splendid vision in which all prophecy closed; and in the meantime as having received the indelible impress and seal of such destination from the hand of the Almighty Creator and Former of souls: "Thus saith the Lord that made thee and formed thee from the womb; fear not, O, Jacob my servant, and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen: thou art my servant, I have formed thee, thou shalt not be forgotten by me."[1] These terms as used in Scripture, whether in the Old or New Testament, do not express a free-will doctrine of the use of privileges and opportunities (for which we must look to other terms and another department of Scripture language), but a predestinarian doctrine of Omnipotent grace — the power of God entirely to create and form the spiritual man.

It is thus that a narrow, an exclusive, and a feeble formula robs the language of Scripture of its splendour and force, lowers the majesty of prophecy, and mars the visions of Prophets and Apostles. It signifies not how plainly these speak, how forcibly, how gloriously; how marvellous and sublime a state of things they describe; all they, forsooth, mean, is privileges, means of grace, opportunities. In the idea which carried the soul of the inspired penman out of itself, and lifted him from earth to heaven, these interpre-

[1] Isa. xliv. 2. 21.

ters refuse to see anything but a didactic sentiment. The Old Testament Prophet describes the righteous and holy nation, deformed, alas!—as what individual saint is not?—by errors and sins, but destined in sure course to rise above its alloy, and enter on a perfect, a glorious, and triumphant state, in which it will reign for ever, under its Divine Prince, over a renewed world. He is only speaking, according to these interpreters, of valuable religious opportunities. The Apostle takes up the vision of the Prophet, and contemplates it as now at length fulfilled. Now, under the Gospel, he sees at last the verification of these anticipations; now is the new order of things, the notable day, the acceptable year of the Lord, the pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh. In the new dispensation this regeneration and consummation of all things has actually arrived, and men are ascended with Christ, have their conversation in heaven, and are become citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem; they are endowed with a new nature and inclinations, are born of God, and therefore unable to sin; are dead to sin, and therefore cannot live any longer therein. The Apostle, also, is only speaking of valuable religious opportunities. The true idea of the Prophet and Apostle is thus lost, and a false and inferior one substituted. True, indeed, the righteous nation which the Prophetic vision glorified, was but a supposition; and the fulfilment of that glorious vision which the Apostle saw in the Christian Church was but a supposition also. The fulfilment of the vision was itself an anticipation simply, and as visionary as the vision; yet is the whole supposition from first to last one grand and inspiring prophecy — commenced by Prophet, adopted by Apostle, and carried on from age to age by the Christian Church — of a better world to come, an everlasting reign of justice and truth, and a never ending reward of virtue. By this supposition, retained in its services and formularies, the Church now prophecies, and the child who is pronounced regenerate at the font, and who in our catechism answers that he is a member of Christ and a

child of God, is an unconscious prophet, pointing to a regeneration and a new order of things which will one day really take place. But the interpretative formula now spoken of, robs the great assertion commenced by the Prophet, continued by the Apostle, carried on by the Church, and now inherited by ourselves in our own baptismal formulary, of its true meaning, and substitutes another.

With the general use of supposition, as a recognised and established form in human society, observed, and the distinct adoption of it in the Old and New Testament with reference to the Church and its members ascertained, we come to the consideration now of the language of the Fathers on the same subject, *i.e.* to their doctrine of baptismal regeneration, according to which they speak of all the baptized or members of the Christian Church as regenerate.

The language of the Fathers on this subject having been given in a preceding chapter [1], need not here be repeated. It is enough to refer to that whole, rich, and glowing body of language which represents the state of all baptized persons as freedom, immortality, incorruption, the port of innocence, the life of virtues, the death of sins, purity, illumination, perfection, deity, paradise, and heaven.

Now let any one, with this large body of language before him, all these high and glorious terms applied to all the individual members of the existing Church, first ask himself how on the plainest principles of common sense such language must be interpreted. Are these high statements true of these individuals, in fact? They are not. The baptized are not all good Christians, or even honest men, much less saints in paradise and angels in heaven. Then how and in what manner are these statements made? Clearly they can only be made in one way, viz., as suppositions, presumptions, anticipations. But when, from the necessity of the case, this language has been decided to be hypothetical, let the

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[1] p. 22.

reader call to mind that the form of supposition is no peculiar and unusual one, but that it is an old and recognised form, universal in society and in human language, and applied in the Old and New Testament to the Church, and will not his previous decision be confirmed beyond reasonable doubt? It will plainly appear that the Fathers only follow a current and authorised use, and succeed to the language of Prophets and Apostles, of which their own is only a continuation and extension.

It has indeed been a great mistake in the consideration of this whole question that the language of the Fathers has been divorced from the language of Scripture, and regarded separately and by itself, instead of being regarded, as it is, as the continuation of the language of Scripture, and interpreted in this connexion. This has been a mistake, and the parent of mistakes. For persons who in reading the New Testament would not have doubted, but understood as a matter of course, St. Paul to be speaking hypothetically, when he addressed all the members of any particular Church he was writing to, as saints, dead to sin, and risen again with Christ, think themselves obliged, when they come across the very same language, only somewhat expanded, in the Fathers, to give it a different interpretation, as meaning some mysterious or metaphysical change in the soul, which literally takes place in all visible Christians at baptism, good and bad alike. Such a self-imposed obligation as this is the consequence of separating the language of the Fathers from that of Scripture. When we look at the two in connexion, there can be no reasonable doubt that the one is only the expansion of the other, and that, being substantially the same language, they must receive the same interpretation.

Will it be objected that the Fathers do not *say*, when they use this language, that they use it hypothetically? Such an objection proceeds on a forgetfulness of what the form of supposition is. If we suppose, according to common etiquette, in public or social life, a man, of whom we know

nothing, to be good and upright, and address him as such, do we intimate to him at the same time that this is a supposition on our part, and perhaps not a true one? Such an intimation, it is evident, would undo the very form of supposition, and deprive it of all its meaning, as a rule of courtesy. Thus in poetry again: does the bard, when he sings the praises of his nation, and represent them all as heroes, *say* that it is a supposition which he is making? No; he would by doing so neutralise it. He puts his supposition to his own mind as a fact, and will not see, while he makes it, any fact opposed to it. It is, in short, of the very nature of such suppositions as we are speaking of, that they are stated as facts, not *as* suppositions. Accordingly, this language, as employed in prophecy and the New Testament, is in *form* literal; and so it is as employed by the Fathers. Regeneration and the other heavenly and perfect attributes ascribed by them to all baptized persons, are ascribed in the form of literal statement. The supposition, if made at all, could not be made in any other way.

And if the question be asked, whether the Fathers were themselves always conscious, while they were using this language, that they were using it hypothetically, the answer is, that it is not necessary to the present argument to suppose that they always were. Strong representations, however in the nature of the case hypothetically made, occupy for the time the whole mind of the representer, to the exclusion of opposing facts; and they have only the image which they raise, or the fact of their own creation, before their minds. The human mind is remarkably constituted with respect to the consciousness of its own processes and acts; and is sometimes in one sense conscious of them, in another sense not. Imagine one of the ancient Fathers asserting regeneration, perfection, glory, salvation of the whole baptized body: while he makes the assertion he has only the perfected Church before his mind, not the earthly and mixed one; the Church only as it was designed to be, not as it is. His language is

of *such* a Church literally true, and therefore he may appear to himself at the time to be using such language literally. But ask him, when he has the fact of the mixed or earthly Church distinctly before him, whether he used such language literally of this body, and he would, as a rational man, see that he did not, and that he spoke by supposition and anticipation. And we shall see further on that he himself confesses that he does so.

Again: however hypothetical particular language might originally be, when it is used uniformly and invariably, it contracts in course of time a literal meaning of a conventional kind. Thus regeneration is in its true and original meaning a heavenly and perfect state, and in its true meaning, therefore, can only be asserted hypothetically of all the baptized. But when the hypothetical assertion is uniformly made, it contracts in course of time a conventional meaning; in which meaning it ceases to be an hypothetical, and becomes a literal assertion; the meaning, viz., of admission into the baptismal state. The hypothetical statement that the person is regenerate becomes in effect the literal statement that he is baptized, and made a member of the Church. Regeneration was thus, even under the old dispensation, the technical term to express the admission of a proselyte into the Jewish Church and covenant, and it became so in this way. The person was supposed on his entrance into the new communion to leave the world and all its desires behind him, and become a new man. But this supposition, being uniformly made of the convert from Paganism, became in time the synonym for that conversion, and simply expressed the fact that he had been admitted into the Jewish covenant, in which sense it was not an hypothetical but a literal assertion. The Gospel, in adopting the term regeneration from the Jewish use, raised the supposition of a new moral state into that of a heavenly and perfect one; but the Church's supposition appears to have contracted a conventional meaning similar to what the Jewish did, and to have

grown in time to express the fact of admission into the baptismal state and into the Christian Church. But in deciding the true mode in which the assertion of regeneration as accompanying baptism is made, we must take regeneration in its true and original, and not in any subsequent and conventional, meaning.

Again, it is not necessary, in saying that the Fathers use this language hypothetically, to say that the hypothetical sense is with them perpetual, invariable, and uninterrupted; that it is sustained with perfect consistency, and absolute unity of purpose. As language grows and enlarges, as it swells into ornament and accumulates illustration, there is a tendency in writers to forget in part the original meaning of it, and to diverge from its primitive use and purpose. Thus the Fathers carry on and amplify all the Scripture language about the state of the baptized, as one of death to sin, holiness, resurrection with Christ, perfection, glory; and with this Scriptural language they must be understood to carry on the Scriptural *sense* of this language, which involves real goodness and holiness, and the Scriptural *mode of applying* it to all the baptized, which is the hypothetical one. On the other hand, the wish to exalt the sacrament of baptism may lead them occasionally into a departure from the Scripture use, *i. e.* into language apparently signifying that this new condition of the soul is *really* and *literally* given to all the baptized, and therefore involving, as the meaning of this new condition of the soul, a capacity for holiness, instead of holiness itself. It would not be very surprising if a large body of writers, writing always with freedom, and sometimes with looseness, should as they successively receive and hand down a certain body of language, diverge occasionally from its original meaning, however strongly fixed upon it; and be led, in the process of amplification, aided by the pious wish to exalt the virtue of baptism, sometimes to engraft a new sense upon it. It is perhaps, however, not more than fairness, under such circumstances, to contemplate their lan-

guage in the light of that original meaning which is on the whole dominant in it, and to allow the Scripture type to reappropriate its alienated, and recal its wandering portions. But, if this is not allowed, at any rate it must be seen that the Fathers, so far as they put on this second meaning, only cease to witness in favour of the first, and give no effective witness against it. So far as to the old meaning, that regeneration *is* real holiness, they add a new one, that it is *not*, but only a capacity for it, and teach these two meanings together; so far their language is without meaning; and so far as it is without meaning, it is without authority. So far their whole doctrine of baptism is a confusion and a contradiction, from which no conclusion can be drawn, and to which all appeal would be ridiculous. So far then we are deprived of the Patristic witness to the hypothetical interpretation of baptismal regeneration, and are thrown back simply on the Scriptural. But this is the only result that will follow, and that is not a formidable one; for the Scriptural witness is enough for the purpose.

But the objection to the hypothetical nature of the language of the Fathers respecting the baptized, on the ground of its literalness in *form*, being disposed of, this interpretation of it may still be repelled on the ground on which the same interpretation of Scripture language was, viz., that when the Fathers speak of the sanctity, perfection, and glory of all the baptized, they *mean* no more than the opportunity of attaining that sublime state, a new spiritual capacity bestowed upon Christians; and that with that meaning they make these statements not hypothetically, but literally. But if this interpretative formula is repeated in the case of the Fathers, I repeat my answer to it. Here is a body of language which cannot possibly be understood as it stands, asserting, as it does, nothing short of sanctity, perfection, and glory of all baptized persons, and which, therefore, must be explained on some intelligible principle. And what are the explanations proposed? One explanation is, that the

terms "saint" and "perfect," as used by the Fathers, mean that grace which enables a man to be a saint and to attain perfection; that salvation means the power of attaining salvation, and heaven the opportunity of going to heaven. Another is, that all this is a high supposition, and that the members of the Church are presumed to be saints, and to be saved. Now there is no precedent for the former mode of interpretation. Nowhere in human language does goodness mean the power to be good, or safety the possibility of being saved, or glory and perfection the opportunity of rising to that pre-eminence; and it is evident, that to give such a meaning to these words is to violate the sense in which they are everywhere understood and used. On the other hand, the form of supposition is an universally acknowledged form in human society and human language; it pervades all intercourse of man with man; it passes from social life to poetry, from poetry to inspiration; it is adopted by Prophets, and from these by Apostles. Is there anything unnatural in supposing that writers should use a form of universal use, and that Fathers should take up the language of Apostles? What comparison, then, can there be on the ground of naturalness between the interpretation which, taking this language in its natural meaning, only *applies* it hypothetically, and that which robs it altogether of its natural meaning.

Will it be said that hypothetical assertion is dishonest, and opposed to veracity, and that we cannot suppose it without throwing discredit on the Fathers?—that language must mean literally what it says, or mean nothing? Such an objection has the advantage of being easily stated. To raise it, however, would be, in the first place, to forget what all sides agree to, viz., that the language of the Fathers *cannot* be understood simply as it stands, and that therefore some construction different from the literal one must be put upon it. But, in the next place, such an objection would, in fact, proceed upon a general misapprehension and error respecting

the very nature of language. For what is language but the expression of the whole working of the human mind, not only in its perception of simple matters of fact, but all its modes and postures of thought and feeling. Now, courteous, charitable, high supposition respecting others is one of these modes or postures, and, being such, it must be expressed, and hypothetical assertion is the expression of it. The only question is, is this an understood and recognised form of assertion, so that persons know what it means, and take it for what it is intended to be? If it is, there can be no dishonesty in it. Unless, indeed, we are to say that this posture of the mind respecting others is itself wrong, and that we ought not to suppose or presume at all about others. But to say this would be simply unreasonable, and opposed to the common sense, feeling, and usage of mankind, as well as to the plain practice of Scripture.

The language of supposition, indeed, so far from being artificial or insincere, is the natural language of the human heart, the form which true feeling and love instinctively adopt. It is the language which we use to children when we would raise their tender minds to acts of virtue; we exhort them in this form, persuading them by an innocent flattery that we think, we know, them to be good, in order that, with this impression about themselves, they may do what we bid them as a matter of course, and as if they could not act otherwise. And as it is the earliest, so it is the latest form of exhortation. It is the form used when, with deep convictions, matured powers, and serious aims, the self-respecting mind exhorts itself. The man first thinks and conceives of himself as a virtuous being; one whom a mean action would soil, and an inferior one lower, and then steps to high action upon this impression. A sense of his own moral dignity strengthens him for the moral work, and he advances to the achievement of it on the supposition that he is already of such a character as that particular action indicates and expresses. Thus the ancient bard taught his

nation heroism, by supposing it of them, by representing them to themselves as already of that character, and so binding them to support and maintain it. And by the same form of supposition does Scripture teach, addressing itself to mankind in that style which suits alike the child and the man; giving us, like children, the parental pledge that we are good, and telling us, like men, to look on ourselves as such; and so, on the ground that we already are, exhorting us to be, virtuous and holy. Upon this principle proceed the cheering and animating appeals of St. Paul to his Christian converts, when, assuming that they are already dead to the world and risen with Christ, he treats it as impossible that they should sin; will not hear of it, so to say; rejects the very idea as soon as it occurs. This is the mode of exhortation which suits high natures, and all human nature, so far as it is aspiring: and the true teachers of souls know this secret. They know that the power of sin is a depressing thought, a burden on the mind; then they lift it off for the time, they arrange that we start well and unencumbered; they will not say "begin," but "go on as you have begun," because it is cheering to think that the beginning, which is the most difficult part, is over; the impression inspirits us, and gives strength to overcome ensuing difficulties, which become really less, because they seem so; or, rather, they assume the goal already attained, and only say, "remain there." Thus a great supposition, a high assumption, is made, and what we have to do is to verify it. In heaven above, within the repository of the Divine mind, and as it were suspended over his head, resides the archetype of every man, — the Divine idea in his creation which he was intended ultimately to embody, the designed man. And up to this standard, all who are sincerely bent on fulfilling the will of God and the end of their being are gradually rising, and growing into this sacred heavenly and final form. The inspired teacher anticipates this work, and supposes this ultimate state already attained.

What, indeed, is the prominent and foremost idea in revelation, old or new, but a looking upon things as they ought to be, and as they one day will be, not as they are? The Prophet passing over with a glance the world, with its policy, laws, empires, puts behind him intermediate ground, and communes with the end; fixing his eye upon the horizon of his vision, to which he sends his mind forward as a herald that arrives before the rest of his company. The Apostle is still bolder in anticipating, and improves on the vision of the Prophet by supposing that very glorious vision already fulfilled, and the kingdom of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the resurrection from the dead, and life eternal, to be already realised in the world in the Christian dispensation. So strong is the principle of hope, and so self-assuring, fortifying itself by its own assumptions, and verifying itself by its own imagery.

The rule of supposition has been thus shown to be a rule of natural and general use, and we have seen its working in social life and poetry; its adoption in Scripture, both the Old Testament and New, and thence its use and employment in the Fathers. It only remains now to add, what is sufficiently obvious, that this rule of supposition has only a preliminary use in the absence of the knowledge of facts, and not competing with that knowledge when gained and realised. Thus in society, we presume, in the absence of any knowledge of a man, his virtue and honesty; but should facts to the contrary come distinctly before us, and in a way which called for our notice, we should have to apply no longer our presumption to him, but our knowledge: and as courtesy had its place *before*, so justice and truth would come in *after*, the fact had been ascertained. So the national poet describes his whole nation as admirable and virtuous; but the satirist dissolves this impersonation, and lays the facts before us. He describes society in its real mixture and variety, as consisting of men good, bad, and indifferent. On the one side we have the ideal, on the other the reality. So

the Prophets in the Old Testament fulfil at once both these functions, that of national poet, and that of the true pourtrayer of the nation; extolling the holy and elect people on the one side, while on the other they expose and rebuke, with all the force of an inspired indignation, the vices of the same people, their dishonesty, avarice, injustice, and disobedience. The Apostles fulfil the same double function; and while they glorify the Christian Church as the undefiled spouse of Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the assembly of just men made perfect, they rebuke the sins and corruptions of the same Church, its internal dissensions, jealousies, and unbelief. On the one side all its members are described as dead to sin and risen with Christ; on the other, filthy dreamers, who defile the flesh, who corrupt themselves like brute beasts, who have gone in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the error of Balaam, murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, speaking great swelling words, and foaming out their own shame, are rebuked and threatened; the blackness of darkness is declared to be in reserve for them, and the coming of the Lord is prophesied to judge their ungodly deeds. The presumption of the New Testament is, then, that Christians are saints and holy men; but when the contrary is ascertained in the case of any Christians, the whole previous presumption at once falls to the ground; every individual case stands on its own merits, and the man is judged according to fact. Two different languages and points of view respecting the church and its members, thus go on in the New Testament simultaneously.

The Fathers have the same twofold language. On the one side, they presume that all the members of the church are saints, that they have died to sin and risen with Christ, that they have put on Christ and are clothed with righteousness; they presume about them all that of which regeneration is the summary and technical name. All this is assumed as the effect of baptism, and is supposed, as a matter of course, to accompany that rite of admission into the church; because

with the Apostle they will not contemplate beforehand any lower result. But when they come to an individual case they give up their presumption, and decide it according to facts. They do not allow that a man who lives in sin has died to sin, risen again, been born again, or put on Christ. Before they knew him they presumed it of him; but they do so no longer when they know him, and know that his life does not verify the presumption. St. Jerome says of such men, that they have an apparent and external baptism; but he denies that they have a baptism to Christ, or have put on Christ.[1] By baptism into Christ, and putting on Christ, he obviously means the spiritual grace of baptism or regeneration, as distinguished from the outward rite. So we see that when he has distinctly before him the case of a wicked man, he denies that he is regenerate. St. Basil says that those who trample on the baptismal robe by sinning are stripped of it.[2] It is evident, then, that when he has a sinful life distinctly before him, he does not contemplate the spiritual grace of baptism or regeneration, which the robe signifies, as co-existent with such a life. As soon as he imagines the individual wicked, he imagines him also naked and without the robe, *i. e.* without the grace associated with baptism, or regeneration. "Show me," says St. Gregory Nyssen, "ye who boast of your regeneration and renovation, your morals changed, and prove the reality of your new state by the purity of your life. Let us have some sure proof by which we may know that you are born again; some manifest tokens by which we may distinguish the new man from the old. Before baptism a man was dissolute, avaricious, rapacious,

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[1] Si quis hoc corporeum et quod oculis carnis aspicitur, aquæ tantum accipit lavacrum, non est indutus Dominum Christum. . . . Hæretici vel hypocritæ et hi qui sordide vietitant, videntur quidem accipere baptismum, sed nescio an Christi habeant indumentum. Itaque consideremus ne forte et in nobis aliquis deprehendatur, qui ex eo quod Christi non habet indumentum arguatur non baptizatus in Christo. —Jerom. in Gal. c. 3. v. 27.

[2] Ἀφαιρεῖται μέντοι ἀφ' ἡμῶν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἱματισμοῦ, ἐὰν ἀναξίως αὐτῷ κεχρημένοι φανῶμεν, καταπατοῦντες αὐτὸν, καὶ τῶν σαρκικῶν μολυσμάτων ἀναπίμπλαντες. —Basil in Esai. c. 3. v. 18.

contumacious, a liar, a calumniator; after it let him be modest, sober, contented, charitable, truthful, courteous, affable. As darkness is dispersed by light, so is the old man effaced by righteous actions. Zacchæus after his call changed his course of life; Paul was a persecutor before grace, an Apostle after. Such should be regeneration; so should we abolish the inclination to sin; such should be the conversation of the sons of God, as we after grace are called. We must copy the attributes of our Father, if we would be His true and lawful sons. Our Lord says that we must bless those that hate us, and pray for those that despitefully use us and persecute us, if we would be the children of our Father which is in heaven. He says that we become the sons of God when we imitate the goodness of God."[1] Such passages as these, representing a general line of teaching in the Fathers, appear certainly to show that, however before-hand they may suppose all men regenerate and children of God, who have been admitted into the church by baptism, when they come to the individual case, they decide it by fact. Is the man a good man? if he is, he is a son of God; if he is not, however he may have been called and presumed to be such in baptism, he is not really a son of God. This is their rule of dealing with the baptized Christian.

The distinction, indeed, between outward baptism and inward is one which of itself implies this rule. "I speak not," says Cyril, "of the regeneration of the body, but of the spiritual regeneration of the soul."[2] "There is the baptism of water," says St. Jerome, "and there is the baptism of Christ."[3] Here two baptisms are spoken of, one of which implies regeneration, while the other does not. And what is the test of possessing that baptism which implies regeneration? A holy life. "Those who remain in their sins," says Cyril,

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[1] Gregory Nyss. in Bapt. Christ.
[2] Catech. Lect. 1.
[3] In Galat. iii. 27, 28. "Baptisma Christi" is opposed to "aquæ tantum lavacrum."

"have not attained to the grace of God which is given through Christ in the regeneration of baptism."[1] "Those who live ill," says Jerome, "have an apparent baptism, but not the robe of Christ."[2] St. Cyril is, indeed, in the above statement — that a sinful life is inconsistent with regeneration — referring to a sinful life at the time of receiving baptism; but Jerome's is made without any such special reference. Nor, indeed, is this difference at all an important or relevant one. For regeneration implying, as has been shown, real goodness, a state of sin is as much opposed to it after, as it is at the very time of, baptism. Outward baptism, then, as distinguished from inward, is a term or phrase for the unregenerate state, which the Fathers apply when they are obliged to acknowledge that some members of the Christian Church are not what they were presumed to be. By presumption the whole body was regenerate; but as soon as ever they come to facts, then they divide and distinguish between one part of this body and another, between the true and the false members of it, between those who have undergone the rite, and those who possess the grace represented in baptism. Before they know they hope the best, and they express this hope by assertion; but they will not allow a wicked man, recognised as such, to be regenerate.

I have conducted my readers from the Old Testament to the New, and from the New Testament to the Fathers. It only remains now that I should bring this subject to its natural goal; that, viz., which it attains in the formularies of our Church. In our baptismal service every child is, upon his baptism, asserted to be regenerate; and in our Catechism, the same child is told to assert of himself, that he is a member of Christ, a child of God, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven; and that he has received, in his baptism, the benefit of a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness. The present chapter has decided the sense in which these state-

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[1] Catech. Lect. 1. [2] In Gal. iii. 27, 28.

ments are to be understood, viz., that they are hypothetical. It has also met the objection made to this mode of interpretation, as not being literal. I will only repeat here that the real question is, not what is the literal interpretation of these statements, but what is the true one. These statements in our formularies come before us with a certain history appended to them: these are *old* statements, which have descended from prophets to apostles, from apostles to fathers, and from fathers age after age downwards; till at last we find them before us in our own Prayer-book and ritual. These statements must not, therefore, be isolated, separated from all previous interpretative data, and judged of by themselves. They must be interpreted in connexion with their history, and in connexion with previous language. The asserted regeneration of the whole body of the baptized in our Prayer-book is but the continuation of the asserted righteousness of the holy nation in the Old Testament, and the asserted glory of the Christian Church in the New. The assertion in our formularies is the hereditary representative of an old assertion pervading all Scripture. Is that assertion of Scripture, then, a literal or hypothetical one? If the latter, then is the one in our formularies hypothetical too. The term regenerate comes down to us with a particular meaning stamped upon it, which we cannot remove; according to which meaning it cannot possibly be asserted literally of all baptized persons. This is therefore an hypothetical assertion. A bias in favour of a literal interpretation operates as an obstacle to sound interpretation instead of an assistant to it, if it induces us to invent a meaning for a term which it never had, in order that by help of such a meaning we may produce a literal interpretation. And worse still does this bias for literal interpretation operate, when it leads, as it does in the present instance, even to its own total and conspicuous frustration; when it carries us to the most flagrant and obvious distortion of the natural meaning of words; when it makes us, for the sake of literal interpretation, neglect and violate lite-

ral interpretation, and understand the words regenerate, dead to sin, risen with Christ, new creature, — terms obviously implying real goodness and holiness, — as meaning only a capacity for these dispositions, and so equally applicable to the best and the vilest of mankind. Let us rather take these words in their natural and proper meaning, even though such a meaning will involve, as its result, an hypothetical interpretation of the statements in our formularies. Let us accept without reluctance a high supposition, which descends to us from prophets, apostles, and fathers, and which connects the language of our Prayer-book with the language of the Bible itself, both the Old Testament and the New.

CHAP. IV.

AUGUSTINIAN DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

THE doctrine of predestination does not affect one way or another the standard of practice in morals and religion, because the moral and religious duties of mankind remain the same, whatever be the operation of the grace which is necessary for their fulfilment; and virtue and piety are what they are in themselves, whatever be the rationale of their origin in the individual, whether they are the effects of an irresistible Divine influence, or whether they proceed in part from an original action of the will. The popular working of the doctrine has, indeed, often interfered with morals: men have supposed that because the end was foreordained, that therefore means were unnecessary, and have abandoned themselves to a careless life, on the idea that their future lot being already decreed, for happiness or misery, it did not signify what sort of lives they led in the interim. And this tendency in the popular working of the doctrine of predestination is what makes it so dangerous a one to inculcate on the mass; for the mass being unable to draw distinctions, are easily led away by the most fallacious connexions, and a broad *prima facie* appearance of a sequency takes hold of them, to the utter negativing too often of any attempt to set them right, and show them the false joining they have made of things really disconnected. The working of the doctrine has been often in this way most disastrous to morals and religion, throwing a grave responsibility on whoever makes it the subject of common and promiscuous teaching. But while this has been often the popular inference from the doctrine of predestination, nothing can be more clear than that the doctrine itself affords no warrant for it. The certainty of the

end does not supersede the necessity of means; and virtue and piety, being the qualifications for eternal happiness, are as necessary, in order to attain that ultimate state, if we are predestined to it, as they would be if they depended on our free-will.

And for the same reason that it does not affect the obligation to morals and piety in general, the doctrine of predestination does not affect the choice of the particular *standard* of them. The particular standard which we adopt of moral and religious practice depends on our moral perceptions and judgment, — on our idea of what is the excellent. But the idea of what constitutes the excellent is exactly the same whatever be the rationale of the origin of such excellence in the individual; it is the thing itself, and not its source, with which we are concerned. The means to the end are not affected in quality or in kind the least by the circumstance of that end being foreordained. One standard of religious qualification then may give prominence to faith, another may give prominence to works. There is nothing in the doctrine of predestination to impose either of these standards in preference to the other. The most rigid predestinarian may insist on works as the test of the religious character; the strongest champion of free-will may exalt faith for this purpose. St. Augustine and his school combined with predestinarianism the ascetic standard of religion; and fatalism has not checked the extravagant self-mortifications of Oriental devotees.

But though the doctrine of predestination does not affect at all the standard of human conduct, it makes a great difference in our idea of the Divine. The doctrine of free-will affords a general bestowal of Divine grace, because whatever may be the issue presented in the lives and characters of mankind, there is nothing to hinder but that all have originally received sufficient grace; the failure of which is owing to their own neglect of it, and not to any defect of grace itself. But, according to the doctrine of predestina-

tion, Divine grace is *efficacious*, or certainly achieves its end. Where the ultimate condition, then, of man is a sinful one, grace cannot, according to this doctrine, have been conferred. The extent of the bestowal of grace coincides with the issue in the lives and characters of mankind, and is as limited as is that ultimate goodness which it produces.

But such being the result of the doctrine of predestination, with respect to the Divine bestowal of grace, can the doctrine of predestination be held consistently with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration?

The answer we are to give to this question depends on what our doctrine of baptismal regeneration is, or on the sense in which we understand and hold the doctrine. If we understand the term regeneration in the sense of an *enabling* grace — a grace sufficient for the attainment of salvation; and consequently understand by the doctrine of *baptismal* regeneration the doctrine that this sufficient grace is given to every baptized person; in that sense the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is plainly inconsistent with the doctrine of absolute predestination. The latter doctrine, representing, as it does, Divine grace, as in its very nature efficacious, and accomplishing the end for which it is given, cannot allow grace for the attainment of this end to have been possessed at all, where this end is not attained. But this end is not attained in the case of all the baptized, who do not all become holy persons or all obtain salvation. And therefore, according to this doctrine, grace to attain this end cannot be given universally in baptism.

Indeed, it must be very evident that such a doctrine of baptismal regeneration as has been described, implies free agency, or a self-determining will in man, and depends wholly upon this truth. The very statement of it involves a reference to such a power, because of a sufficient or enabling, as distinguished from an effective grace, free-will is the *complement*, and is necessary for any use or effect of such grace at all. Such a doctrine of baptismal regeneration,

then, is based on an original supposition, altogether contrary to that on which the predestinarian proceeds.

Subtle modes may, indeed, be attempted of reconciling such baptismal grace with the doctrine of predestination; but their delusiveness will appear on a very slight examination. First, the general ground may be taken that the doctrine of predestination is not inconsistent with sacramental grace. And this position may be admitted as a true one; but it is a very different position from the particular one before us. The formula, that predestination is consistent with sacramental grace, leaves the kind of grace, and the degree of its attendance upon the sacrament, open; and it is this indefiniteness which allows of the consistency asserted. One who holds that sufficient grace is only given to a few of the whole body of the baptized, may still believe that that grace is given to those, to whom it is given, through a particular channel, and that baptism is the channel. Again, one who denies sufficient grace, is not prevented from appending some grace *short* of it, to the universal ministration of the rite. The formula, then, above is verified; because it is enough for the sacrament being indefinitely a channel of grace, if it is sometimes the channel of sufficient grace, or if it is always the channel of some sort of grace; and neither of these is inconsistent with predestination. But, in the case of baptismal regeneration, as above defined, this indefiniteness is removed; and that grace is described both as being a sufficient grace, and also as uniformly accompanying the sacrament. But no predestinarian can admit that sufficient grace uniformly accompanies the sacrament of baptism. For only some of the whole body of the baptized are saved, and not all. But as, according to his theory, grace always attains its object, he necessarily concludes that, where salvation has not been attained, grace sufficient for the attainment of it has not been imparted.

It may be said, again, that the predestinarian need not

believe in the indefectibility of grace, but may hold that grace may be given for a time, and then withdrawn; that, consequently, he may believe baptism to be always accompanied *at the time* by grace, and that this is all that is required for a belief in baptismal regeneration. But baptismal regeneration, as above defined, is a *sufficient* grace always accompanying baptism; and such a temporary grace as is here spoken of is not always sufficient grace. Grace may be temporary, or may be given for a time and then withdrawn, for two reasons — either because the person himself has neglected it, when it would have been sufficient for his salvation, had he availed himself of it; or because it was never the design of the Donor to continue it beyond a certain time. If it is temporary for the *former* of these two reasons, it is undoubtedly sufficient grace; but it is a grace which no predestinarian can allow to be universally given in baptism. If it is temporary for the *latter* reason, the predestinarian can allow *such* a grace universally to accompany baptism (*i.e.* such a grace, *at least*, where more is not given); but such a grace is not sufficient grace. The reconciler of baptismal regeneration with the doctrine of absolute predestination confounds temporariness with one of these reasons with temporariness for the other. He first presents to himself a grace which need be no more than temporary, because it may be withdrawn for neglect, and identifies this grace with that of baptismal regeneration. He then substitutes for this grace a grace which is temporary, because it was always the design of the Donor to withdraw it, and continues the same identification, forgetting the substitution.

Again, it may be argued, that just as the natural life is, as a Divine creation, perfectly consistent with an intention on the part of the same creating providence to destroy it as soon as made; so the new or spiritual birth may be really produced by Divine grace in the soul at baptism, and yet come to nothing in consequence of the intention of God not

to carry out, develope, or mature His own spiritual creation. And upon this ground it may be urged, that the predestinarian, while he leaves God's *development* of His own gift in baptism to the working of a secret and mysterious decree which has ordained from all eternity the maturing of it in some cases and the suppression of it in others, may still believe that the gift of a new or spiritual birth is the uniform accompaniment of baptism. But to argue thus would be to reason from metaphor to reality. Scripture makes use of similitudes and analogies drawn from visible nature in order to impress upon us spiritual truths; but we are not to suppose that the spiritual truth itself is in all respects like the thing in nature to which it is compared. It is sufficient for the design of Scripture, if it is so far like it, that the comparison will be substantially serviceable, and give us a more vivid idea of the thing than we should have without it. Scripture thus calls the grace associated with baptism a new or spiritual birth, comparing it to natural birth; but we are not to suppose that therefore whatever may be asserted of natural birth is true of the birth spiritual. There is one important difference between them, which is implied in the very fact of comparison,—viz. that the one birth has reference to life temporal, the other to life eternal. And this difference of itself is enough to destroy the argument just mentioned. Natural life, being a thing of present time, is an undoubted present possession, whatever may become of it the next moment; the truth of it is not contradicted by any subsequent withdrawal of it. But the life spiritual has reference to eternity: the new birth is given, according to what has been said, for the express purpose of enabling the person to attain eternal life, and this power is essential to it. To say, then, that the new birth is prevented from becoming such a power, is to say that it has never taken place. If the gift is bestowed with a reserve against this enabling operation of it, the gift is not bestowed at all. For such an enabling operation is contained in the gift

itself, which cannot be spoken of as being anything at all without it.

It is indeed trifling with the subject to suppose God imparting the gift of the new birth with the intention of taking it away, before it has become serviceable for the purpose for which it is given. Such a supposition is unmeaning and self-contradictory. The substance of the gift cannot be separated from its operation, nor can we argue about the new birth as if it were a material thing, which could, according to an original design, be taken out of the soul without any contradiction to its having been once put into it. For are we to consider this gift an important one or not? If it is not an important one, it is not worth our consideration at all; but if we are to consider it an important one, it is plainly absurd to think that it can be given in this way. A gift is of no advantage to a man which is withdrawn before it is useful to him. If the new birth is of no service toward the attainment of eternal life, it might as well not have been, or rather, it cannot really *have* been, bestowed.

The same answer may be made to any similar argument drawn from the idea of regeneration as a certain character or mark impressed once for all upon the soul. Baptism may certainly be conceived as impressing this mark upon the soul, and impressing it indelibly, so that it is not removed by any subsequent sin, but adheres even to the damned. And the predestinarian may allow such a character to be impressed on every soul at baptism. But though he can allow it as a mere passive mark upon the soul, he cannot attach the idea of *power* to it, such as is necessary in order to make it regenerative. Indeed, it should be remarked that the schoolmen, who introduced this idea of the baptismal character, never spoke of it as regeneration, or grace of any kind, from which they carefully distinguished it; though it is difficult to know what they meant by it And so of any change of a metaphysical kind, which baptism may be supposed to produce in the soul. Such a change, to be admitted by a predestinarian

as a universal effect of baptism, must be separated from an ultimate moral or spiritual end toward which it is enabling.

An attempt may be made again to reconcile this doctrine of baptismal regeneration with that of predestination, on the general principle that it is not unreasonable to hold contradictory truths; upon which principle, if free-will can be held together with predestination, it may be maintained that baptismal regeneration may too. But though it is undoubtedly true that we may reasonably hold contradictory truths, and that on some mysterious subjects we are obliged to do so, we must consider the mode in which, and the ground on which, we are enabled to do this. If two opposite truths are each asserted, to begin with, with a reserve in favour of each other, there can be no inconsistency in holding them afterwards in combination; for the contradiction is neutralized by the allowance thus expressly made for it, and each of the truths is qualified with a view to the combination, and so fitted for it. But if the two opposite truths are held and stated, to begin with, in such a way as to exclude each other, they cannot rationally be held afterwards in combination. Thus, if we understand unity, to begin with, in such a sense as to be consistent with trinity, and trinity in such a sense as to be consistent with unity, we can afterwards reasonably hold the two in combination. The Catholic believer, then, who does so understand these terms in the first instance, can reasonably hold a Trinity in Unity of the Godhead. But it would be absurd to say that a Socinian could hold together with his Unitarianism a Trinity of the Godhead; because he is a Unitarian in a sense expressly exclusive of a Trinity. And thus, if predestination and free-will are stated, in the first instance, with a reserve in favour of each other, they can be held together; and many Christians do so hold them together. But the predestinarian holds the doctrine of predestination in a sense expressly *exclusive* of free-will, and therefore it would be absurd to say that a predestinarian could hold the doctrine of free-will. And this decides the

question with reference to which these remarks are made. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration, here spoken of, implies free-will; the predestinarian, therefore, who has defined his doctrine so as to exclude free-will, cannot consistently hold the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

There is evidently, then, an inconsistency between the former of these doctrines and the latter, taken in the sense in which it has been taken in this chapter; nor is it possible by any subtlety of explanation to reconcile the two. It is obvious that the predestinarian cannot consider the operation of Divine grace to coincide with membership of the visible Church. The visible Church is in his theology a great external system and framework within which the operations of grace are conducted; but those operations acknowledge a Divine decree, which has from all eternity selected particular individuals as the objects of them, and not the outward membership of the Church, as their basis. The different secret channels of grace by which God acts upon individual souls may all flow within the Church, but the Church itself is no general channel of grace to all its members.

With these considerations I come to the Augustinian treatment of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. It is evident that St. Augustine could not, as a maintainer of the doctrine of absolute predestination, hold the doctrine of baptismal regeneration in the sense in which it has been hitherto taken in this chapter, viz., as the doctrine that every baptized person has an enabling grace given him sufficient for attaining salvation. The very fact of his holding an absolute predestination is enough of itself to prove that he *could* not hold such a doctrine as the latter. And, when we look into those of his writings which bear upon this subject, we find abundant evidence in almost every page that he *did* not.[1] He plainly maintains, and constantly urges upon the

[1] See chapters v. vi. vii. viii. of my treatise on the Augustinian doctrine of Predestination.

attention of his readers, that the grace of final perseverance is necessary to salvation, but that the grace of perseverance is, at the same time, an absolute gift of God, imparted to some of the baptized, and not to others, according to God's arbitrary will and sovereign decree made before the foundation of the world. But those who are without a grace which is necessary for attaining salvation plainly have not grace sufficient for that purpose. St. Augustine, then, holds that some of the baptized have not sufficient grace given them for attaining salvation. There is, according to his system, something necessary for salvation, for the bestowal of which baptism is no pledge or security whatever; a necessary grace, which is *extra*-baptismal, insured by no outward rite or ordinance, but only by a secret and arbitrary decree of God. He plainly does not hold, then, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration in the sense in which it has been hitherto taken in this chapter. The rationale of Divine grace implied in that doctrine, and the Augustinian one, are two contrary rationales, which cannot be harmonised, or rationally combined. The one maintains an universal, the other a limited bestowal of saving grace within the Church; the one adopts a visible sacrament as the pledge of such grace, the other regards no sacrament, and nothing visible whatever, but a secret Divine decree only, as the security for it.

But though St. Augustine did not hold baptismal regeneration *in the sense* in which it has been hitherto taken in this chapter, it is abundantly evident that he held, for his writings constantly refer to and imply, baptismal regeneration. In what sense, then, did he hold it? The answer is, that he held it in the sense which has been maintained in this treatise as the Scriptural and Patristic one, viz., in the sense of a high supposition which is made about every one who is baptized and admitted into the visible Church. The term regeneration does not mean, with St. Augustine, any more than it does in Scripture, a mere capacity for goodness

and holiness, but goodness and holiness itself. And *baptismal* regeneration has with him that meaning which follows immediately and necessarily from this sense of the *term* regeneration. It is not a *literal* assertion that such regeneration has taken place in all the baptized, for that would be plainly contrary to facts; but an *hypothetical* one — a presumption made about the whole body of the baptized, that they are holy men and saints.

The following passages appear, in the first place, to decide his sense of the term regeneration, viz., as signifying actual holiness itself as distinguished from the mere imparted capacity for it. Speaking generally of the baptized body as regenerate, when he comes to the case of individuals, St. Augustine distinguishes between some of this body who are really so, and others who are not; and for this purpose goes at once to the test of a holy life and conduct, pronouncing the true and earnest, as distinguished from pretended or careless Christians, to be the really regenerate. "Behold, the baptized man hath received the sacrament of nativity. He hath a divine, a holy, an ineffable sacrament — a sacrament which renews by the remission of all sins. Yet let him look within, and see if that is accomplished in the heart which is done in the body. Hath he love? If he hath, then let him say, I am born of God. If he hath not, a mark indeed has been placed upon him; but he is a deserter and vagabond. Let him not say he is born of God unless he hath love. Will he say, I have the sacrament? Let him hear the Apostle: 'Though I understand all mysteries, and though I have all faith, so that I could move mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.' Let him hear another Apostle: 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.' 'In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.' Love, then, alone distinguishes between the children of God and the children of the devil. Let all sign themselves with the sign

of the cross; let all say Amen; all sing Halleluiah; all be baptized, go to church, build churches, love alone is the distinction. They who have love are born of God; they who have it not are not born of God."[1]

In the same way he treats the case of grown-up persons baptized in infancy, laying down, as the essential criterion of regeneration in their case, a holy life and conduct, their really acting up to and substantiating the profession which was made for them at baptism, and upon the strength of which they were admitted to the sacrament. "What effect baptism has in the case of infants we may gather," he says, "from the rite of circumcision which Abraham received after, the people before, justification. Abraham received circumcision as the sign of a righteousness which he already had; for he had already believed with his heart, and that had been imputed to him for righteousness. In Isaac, on the other hand, who was circumcised the eighth day of his birth, the sign of the righteousness of faith preceded; and, since he imitated the faith of his father, the righteousness itself followed when he grew up. In the same way, in baptized infants, the sacrament of regeneration precedes; and if they hold to Christian piety, conversion of the heart will follow that of which the outward sign preceded. The sacrament of baptism is one thing, conversion of heart is another."[2] It is plain that "conversion of heart" in this passage has the same place and meaning which "being born of God" had in the preceding one; and that it stands for true regeneration, or that reality of which visible baptism is the sign. When St. Augustine then comes to the case of grown-up Christians he evidently does not allow them to be considered, or to consider themselves, regenerate on the strength of having received the sacrament of baptism, but asks them first

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[1] In 1 Ep. Joan. Tract v. Faber's Primitive Doctrine of Regeneration, p. 222.

[2] De Bapt. contra. Don. l. 4. c. 24, 25.

whether they substantiate the baptismal symbol of a death unto sin and a resurrection to righteousness by their actual life and conversation. "God distinguishes," he says, "the regenerate from the unregenerate in mature life by their actions." "None are spiritually regenerate, or members of Christ, except the good."[1]

To the same effect is the distinction between inward and outward, between spiritual and bodily baptism. For this inward or spiritual baptism, as distinguished from outward and bodily, is the thing signified by baptism, as distinguished from the sign; that is to say, is regeneration. And therefore, if the test of such inward baptism is maintained to be a holy life, the same is maintained to be the test of regeneration. This distinction entered into the passage just quoted, and runs remarkably through the following: "'If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.' Our Lord speaks not alone of the visible water which is given in the sacrament of baptism, which good and bad can have alike, though none can be saved without it, and which, though it belongs to the church, yet goes outside of it, being found among those who went out from us because they were not of us; like the water of those memorable rivers, which, though they could not be denied to be rivers of Paradise, yet did not belong to Paradise alone, but flowed out of the garden elsewhere;—not of this water does He speak, but under the name of water He means the invisible gift of the Holy Spirit, ... that invisible fountain with the overflowing of which is made glad the city of God, but to which no stranger, none who is not worthy of eternal life, approaches; that fountain which is peculiar to the church of Christ, to whom it is said, 'Let it be only thine own, and not strangers with thee[2],' and 'a garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.'[3]

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[1] Deus regeneratos a generatis, si jam in majoribus ætatibus sunt, secundam propria facta discernit. (Op. Imp. contra Jul. l. 3. c. 38.) Nec regenerati spiritualiter in corpus et membra Christi coædificantur nisi boni.—De Unit. Eccl. c. 21.

[2] Prov. v. 17. [3] Cant. iv. 12.

Ye Donatists absurdly understand by this water the visible sacrament of baptism; as if to the spring shut up and fountain sealed, Simon Magus, who was baptized, could approach, and all those dissemblers, of whom Cyprian says, with grieving, that they renounce the world in word, but not in deed; those greedy bishops of whom he witnesses that they got lands by fraud, and increased their resources by usury. Such things are found among those who are baptized and who baptize, with visible baptism. But to that spring shut up and fountain sealed, of which no stranger partakes — to the fountain sealed, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, none of these approaches, except he be converted, and such a cleansing await him that he shall be no more a stranger, but a partaker of the peace of heaven, a member of the holy unity, fulfilled with the undivided love, and fellow-citizen with the angels."[1] This passage occurs in an argument against the Donatists, who charged the church with profaning baptism by allowing it to admit so large and miscellaneous a body into the church. The reply proceeds on the distinction between the outward and the true church and the outward and the true baptism; and shows that the bad portion of the church had had access to the former of these only, and not to the latter, or that they had only received the sign of regeneration as distinguished from the reality.

In the following passage, it is true, he hesitates at first between two modes of speaking respecting baptized persons who live in sin; between saying that they are born of the Spirit, though not profitably, and not in such a way as to admit them into the kingdom of heaven, and saying that they are *not* born of the Spirit; but he evidently inclines to the latter language. "'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' To say that every one who enters into the kingdom of heaven

[1] Contra Cresconium Donat. l. 2. c. 13. *et seq.*

must first be born of water and of the Spirit is one thing, and to say that every one who is born of water and of the Spirit shall enter into the kingdom of heaven is another thing. For Simon Magus was born of water and of the Spirit, and yet he did not enter the kingdom of heaven. And such is the case with heretics. Or shall we say that no one but the truly converted is born of the Spirit; in which case men such as Simon Magus *are not born of the Spirit.* One of these alternatives must be admitted; either the wicked are born of the Spirit, but to their destruction, not to their salvation, and heretics in like manner; or the text which says 'the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee the deceitful,' must be understood to mean that the wicked are *not* born of the Spirit; and in that case a man may be baptized with water and not born of the Spirit. And, therefore, men may have one common baptism and not one common church, just as within the church itself the righteous and the wicked have one common baptism, and not one common Spirit."[1]

The alternative of language, that the wicked are born of the Spirit in baptism, so far as it is allowed, is only allowed in this passage in an ambiguous and inconsistent way, with the qualification that they are not admitted into the kingdom of heaven; a salvo which greatly neutralises it, for to be born again and to enter into the kingdom of God are evidently different portions of one whole language representing a particular spiritual state, one of which, therefore, cannot be excluded without impairing the other. But this alternative evidently is made to give way at last to the other more straightforward and consistent mode of speaking, and the writer recurs to his general and established distinction between the outward and the spiritual baptism.

These are specimens of a general use of language in St. Augustine; and they appear to decide his sense of the term

[1] De Bapt. contra Don. l. 6. c. 12.

regeneration; viz., as being the Scriptural one of actual holiness and sanctity of life. How, then, with this meaning of the term regeneration, does he hold *baptismal* regeneration, or speak of the whole body of the baptized as regenerate? The answer is, that he speaks so hypothetically, and not literally; and that he himself tells us with his own mouth that he *does* speak so. Thus, in the following passages he explains how it is that the regenerate are not always the elect, do not always persevere, are not always good and holy men; these terms being, according to his theological system, synonymous; for election involves personal holiness in St. Augustine's theology: and his explanation is, that those who are called by this name are not always really what they are called; the regenerate, when wicked men, being regenerate only by supposition and presumption. "Wonderful," he says, "very wonderful that God, who adopts the sons of unbelievers as His own, should not to His own sons, whom He hath regenerated in Christ, and to whom He hath given faith, hope, and charity, give perseverance."[1] Wonderful that is that some should be regenerate and yet not be ultimately good men. This is his difficulty: now for his explanation. "We *call* them," he says, "elect, disciples of Christ, and children of God, because those whom we see to have been regenerated and to live piously *are to be called so.* But if they have not perseverance, and do not abide in that in which they have begun, they are not truly called so: *they are only called, and are not really, children of God,* inasmuch as they are not so in His eyes who knows what they will be, and knows they will turn from good to evil."[2] Again, com-

[1] Mirandum est quidem multumque mirandum, quod filiis suis quibusdam Deus quos regeneravit in Christo, quibus fidem, spem, delectionem dedit, non dat perseverantiam, eum filiis alienis scelera tanta dimittat, atque impertita gratia faciat filios suos. — De Corrept. et Grat. c. 8.

[2] *Appellamus ergo nos et electos, et Christi discipulos, et Dei filios, quia sic appellandi sunt,* quos regeneratos pie vivere cernimus; sed tunc vere sunt quod appellantur, si manserint in eo propter quod sic appellantur. Si autem perseverantiam non habent, id est in eo quod cœperunt esse non manent, non vere appellantur quod appellantur et non sunt: apud eum enim hæc non sunt, cui notum est quod futuri sunt, id est, ex bonis mali.—De Corrept. et Grat. c. 9. "Regenerate" is used here partly as a technical synonyme for *baptized.*

paring one of the elect who perseveres with one not elect, who falls away, he says, "Have not both been called, and both followed the call, and both been justified, and both renewed by the laver of regeneration? They have: but if one who had foreknowledge heard this said of both, he would answer and say, This is all true according to our temporary standard, but, according to another, one of these two never was with us; for, if he had been with us, he would have remained with us. There was even before a distinction between them. What distinction? The books of God are open, and let us not avert our eye. Holy Scripture cries aloud, and let us hear it. They were not of us, because they were not called according to His purpose; were not chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; not predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things."[1] Here he supposes two men, alike in baptism, church membership, and the name and title of regenerate, one of whom turns out ultimately a good, and the other a bad, man; and he decides that the bad man never was really what he was called, never was "of us;" *i. e.* never was our brother in Christ, never was one of the regenerate. Again: "Let not the fact that God withholds perseverance from His sons surprise us. God forbid indeed that this should be true of those who are predestinated and called according to His purpose; *i. e.* of the true sons of promise. But others who are about to live and die in sin, though for the time that they live piously they are *called* the children of God, are not considered the children of God by the foreknowledge of God."[2] Again: "Those who

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[1] Nonne postremo utrique vocati fuerant, et vocantem secuti, utrique ex impiis justificati, et per lavacrum regenerationis utrique renovati? Sed si hæc audiret ille, qui sciebat proculdubio quod dicebat, respondere posset et dicere: *Vera sunt hæc, secundum hæc omnia ex nobis erant; veruntamen secundum aliam quandam discretionem non erant ex nobis;* nam si fuissent ex nobis, mansissent utique nobiscum. Quæ est tandem ista discretio? Patent libri Dei; non avertamus aspectum: clamat Scriptura divina; adhibeamus auditum. Non erant ex eis, quia non erant secundum propositum vocati; non erant in Christo electi ante constitutionem mundi, non erant in eo sortem consecuti, non erant prædestinati secundum propositum ejus, qui universa operatur.—De Dono Perseverantiæ, c. 9.

[2] Nec nos moveat quod filiis suis qui-

are not about to persevere, but to fall away finally from a Christian faith and conversation, are not undoubtedly, even at the time of their pious living, to be reckoned in the number of the elect, not being separated by God's foreknowledge and predestination from the mass of perdition, and therefore not being called according to His purpose, but only with that call wherewith 'many are called,' as distinguished from that election wherewith the few are chosen. And yet so long as they believe, and are baptized, and live well, who will refuse them the *name* of elect? though such a name plainly comes from those who know not, not from Him who knows, what they will become." [1] And in like manner he distinguishes between those who are "regenerated according to predestination," and those who are regenerated, but not according to the Divine decree; the former, it is implied, being the really regenerate, while the latter are regenerate only in name and by supposition. "As the generation of sinful flesh by the first Adam draws all men, who are thus generated, unto condemnation; so the generation of the spirit of grace by the second Jesus Christ draws unto justification and life eternal all who are *according to predestination regenerated.*" [2] These passages are exactly to the same purpose as the former ones quoted. They openly confess and put forward the hypothetical use of certain terms as the true and correct use of them when applied to the mass of Christians and the

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busdam Deus non dat istam perseverantiam. Absit enim ut ita esset, si de illis prædestinatis essent, et secundum propositum vocatis, qui vere sunt filii promissionis. Nam isti, cum pie vivunt, dicuntur filii Dei, sed quoniam victuri sunt impie, et in eadem impietate morituri, non eos dicit filios Dei præscientia Dei.—De Corrept. et Grat. c. 9.

[1] Qui perseveraturi non sunt, ac sic a fide Christiana et conversatione lapsuri sunt, proculdubio nec illo tempore quo bene pieque vivunt, in istorum numero computandi sunt. Non enim sunt a massa illa perditionis præscientia Dei et prædestinatione discreti; et ideo non secundum propositum vocati; ac per hoc nec electi: sed in eis vocati de quibus dictum est, *Multi vocati*, non eis de quibus dictum est, *pauci vero electi. Et tamen quis neget eos electos, cum credunt et baptizantur, et secundum Deum vivunt? Plane dicuntur electi a nescientibus quid futuri sint*, non ab illo qui eos novit non habere perseverantiam quæ ad beatam vitam perducit electos, scitque illos ita stare, ut præscierit esse casuros.—De Corrept. et Grat. c. 7.

[2] De Pecc. Merit. et. Rem. l. 2. c. 27.

main body of the baptized; the terms to which he assigns this use being the terms "elect," "regenerate," "child of God." These terms imply, as I have said, personal holiness in St. Augustine's sense of them. And therefore, as applied to the whole body of Christians, he tells us, as common sense of itself dictates must be the case, that he understands these terms to be applied hypothetically only, and not literally.

To conclude, then, we find throughout St. Augustine a constant and familiar reference to baptismal regeneration, or the regeneration of the whole body of the baptized, as an acknowledged position and statement in the Church; and we say immediately, and we say truly, that St. Augustine held baptismal regeneration. But the question then comes, in what sense he held it, as a literal or an hypothetical assertion? A person who read him only for the purpose of picking out these references to baptismal regeneration, and making them into a catena, might suppose that the assertion of it was literal; for he says or implies constantly that all the baptized are regenerate, which is in form a categorical assertion. And such a person would be offended at the idea of another interpretation as unfair and deceptive, would say that he took plain words in their plain meaning, that he understood St. Augustine as asserting a literal and true regeneration of the whole Christian body in baptism, and could admit no gloss or explanation. But one who read St. Augustine not to pick out particular verbal statements only, but to examine his whole system, and the sense in which he uses words, would see in time that a literal interpretation of his assertion was simply impossible. His doctrine of predestination, in the first place, does not admit of it; and, in the next place, he tells us, with his own mouth, that his assertion is not literal, but hypothetical. What are we to reply to a writer's own explanation of his own language? It is plain, then, what is the Augustinian doctrine of baptismal regeneration; that it is a high presumption, a charitable supposition, made re-

specting every baptized person, that he is a good and holy man,—a supposition identical with that which pervades the New Testament, that all the members of the Christian Church are saints, dead to sin, and risen with Christ. It is evident that St. Augustine has two modes of speaking of the individual Christian; that he first speaks of him in the same way that our Baptismal Office and Catechism do — as elect, regenerate, a disciple of Christ, and child of God, and that so far he goes upon the presumptive ground; that he then leaves the presumptive ground, and comes to examine him in himself; and that, when he does this, his test of regeneration is personal holiness and goodness. Man cannot search the heart, and the Church does not profess to decide upon the inward state and ultimate prospects of her members. All those who enter into her pale by baptism are presumed to be regenerate, elect, and predestinated to eternal life. But if any of these, as a vast number do, fall into sin, and continue in it, he immediately abandons the presumption at first made about them, by telling them that it was only a presumption. He then says they were only "called" regenerate, and were never really so. The question of their real regeneration hangs in suspense, and is not decided till, by final perseverance, they have proved their title to the name: "Non enim revera Domini Corpus est quod cum illo non erit in æternum."[1]

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[1] De Doct. Christ. l. 3. c. 32.

CHAP. V.

REGENERATION OF INFANTS.

IT has been shown in the preceding chapters that regeneration, as asserted of persons at their baptism and admission into the Church, is a supposition, and the hypothetical principle of interpretation on this subject has been illustrated and explained. But now a further question remains, and that not an unimportant one, viz., whether this supposition ever becomes in any cases a supposition which we know to be true; *i. e.* a literal and positive assertion. Can we ever say of particular persons that they are regenerate, assert it as a thing which is known or ascertained of them? All that we have as yet reached by way of conclusion is, that *if* men are finally holy and good they are regenerate. But can we in any cases assert of particular persons that they are finally holy and good?

In the case of adults, then, this question is very summarily and easily settled. First, we cannot foresee the future, and therefore, however piously and virtuously a man may be living at present, we cannot answer for his future life, or be certain that he will not finally fall away. Again, even if the end of life is reached, and this difficulty be removed, still we cannot penetrate the heart, or be certain that the apparent goodness and holiness of any man is real and solid. We may form reasonable conjectures, and in some cases arrive at probabilities sufficiently strong to amount to moral certainty; still, what we assert of any man in this respect we must assert with a due reserve for human ignorance, and with the qualification that, after all, God alone knows the heart, while man has no more than the outward or apparent life and

conduct from which to judge. We cannot assert, then, in any cases of adult persons, that they are regenerate, as a certain and ascertained thing; and though in particular instances we may feel all reasonable confidence, and make assertions in form literal and positive, we shall, if we come to the bottom of them, find that, after all, we only make them presumptively, and use the language of hope and charity, not of certainty and knowledge.

But in the case of infants the argument on this question is more complicated, and leads to a different conclusion. I speak of the case of infants *as such*. Upon the supposition that infants will live and grow up to be adults, and considering them with reference to that future and mature life, they come of course under exactly the same conditions on this subject under which adults come, and the same argument that has been just applied to the case of adults may be applied to them, and with an important addition; for we have adults before us, and even see them in some cases living, at any rate for the present and outwardly, pious and good lives; but of an infant we cannot be certain that when he is grown up he will even maintain an outwardly good life and conduct. Considered, then, with reference to his future and mature life, the regeneration of the infant is as hypothetical as that of the adult, and more so. But in the case of infants *as such* the argument is more intricate, and the conclusion different, as the following considerations will show.

The practice of the Church with respect to baptism has been rather the converse of the doctrine. Infant baptism has grown up so completely to be the general rule, to which adult baptism is the exception, that we are apt popularly to regard the institution as primarily and in the first instance connected with infants, and only secondarily with adults. But the doctrine of baptism is the very converse of this, the institution being in truth primarily designed for adults, and only secondarily for infants. By baptism being primarily designed for adults, I mean that adults alone are *in themselves*

fit subjects of baptism. Repentance and faith are plainly laid down in Scripture as the necessary conditions of baptism. Adults can in themselves fulfil these conditions, and therefore adults can be in themselves fit subjects of baptism. But infants cannot in themselves fulfil these conditions, and therefore are not in themselves fit subjects of baptism. They are only made such by the faith and repentance of other persons being accepted as a substitute for their own, that is, by allowing other persons to stand in their place, so far as these conditions are concerned, and expressly accounting and regarding them so far as if they were those other persons. They are thus presented for baptism, not as having any fitness for it in themselves, but only as being supposed to have for the time the fitness of other persons. Nor does it make any difference to this question whether infants are or are not represented by particular sponsors at baptism; in either case their fitness for admission to it is alike a supposed and a vicarious one, as distinguished from any in themselves. Infants cannot believe and repent themselves, and therefore, in whatever form and mode these conditions may be represented as fulfilled for them, whether by particular sponsors who appear at the celebration of the rite, or by the Church at large, whose presence is understood at it, these conditions must alike be fulfilled *for* them, and the fitness of the infant for baptism is alike a vicarious and representative fitness.

Two grounds indeed occur upon which infants might appear at first sight to be in themselves fit subjects of baptism; one that of their guilt, the other that of their innocence. It may be said that infants are born in sin, and therefore in themselves need regeneration; and it may be said that infants are innocent, and therefore are in themselves fit objects of Divine favour and grace; and thus two apparently contradictory grounds would seem to unite for the purpose of proving infants to be fit subjects in themselves of baptism. But such reasoning would be very insufficient. Infants do indeed come legitimately under both

these seemingly contradictory aspects, and may truly be described as being either guilty or innocent beings according to the department of truth to which we for the time refer. According to a truth of revelation, a mysterious and incomprehensible one, they are born in sin and are guilty beings; according to a truth of natural reason, having never actually sinned, they are innocent ones. But neither this guilt nor this innocence constitutes fitness for baptism. The guilt does not, for guilt, though part of the condition of baptism, is not the whole; it constitutes a need only, not a worthiness of, that sacrament. For this latter purpose it must have been succeeded by repentance; and infants cannot repent. Their innocence does not, for baptism is not instituted for the innocent, but for the guilty. Persons may indeed combine these two grounds, as if the guilt and the innocence of infants, counterbalancing each other, were an equivalent on the whole for repentance, and made together a fitness for baptism. But this would be a fallacy. For sin and repentance have an express relation to each other, and so form together one moral state in the individual; but the guilt and the innocence of infants have no relation to each other, but are two opposite and independent truths, each of which in its turn has a whole and exclusive possession of the field. According as we refer to a revealed mystery, or to a truth of reason, the infant is simply guilty, or simply innocent; but as simply guilty he is not worthy of baptism, as simply innocent he does not need it.

Infants, then, not being in themselves fit subjects of baptism, but being admitted to that rite upon the faith and repentance of others, which is accepted as a substitute for, or is supposed to be, their own, it might have been thought perhaps, beforehand, that the same supposition would go on *after* baptism; and that, as they were admitted to the grace of regeneration upon a hypothetical faith and repentance, they would possess and retain it upon the same ground; that their regeneration, that is, would still be considered to stand upon

that faith and repentance which had been supposed for them, as distinguished from any conditions which they fulfilled themselves. And in that case the regeneration of infants, even regarding them as infants simply, and without any reference to a future maturity, would be necessarily hypothetical; for the faith and repentance, upon the strength of which such regeneration had been conferred, being an entirely hypothetical faith and repentance, the gift itself could not be possessed in a mode or sense more literal than that of the ground on which the possession of it rested. Infants as such could never be, upon this rule, really regenerate, because the conditions of regeneration could not be in their case really fulfilled. But, under the cover of a supposed regeneration, their real state would be such as it is prior to the Gospel, viz. one of guilt on one side, of innocence on the other, according as we judged them by the truth of mystery or of reason. Nor could they possibly get out of this state till they ceased to be infants, and by the repentance and faith of a maturer age fulfilled in reality those conditions of which the fulfilment had been supposed for them at the time of their baptism, and so attained that real regeneration which follows upon such real fulfilment.

But this has not been in fact the course which the Church has taken in deciding the state of infants as such after baptism; but after infants have been admitted to baptism on the strength of others' faith and repentance, the ground, when they *are* baptized, changes, and they are considered to possess baptism and its privileges in their own right and upon their own basis. They get baptism on one ground, they keep it on another; and the principle of substitution having served its purpose in bringing them into a particular state, is then dispensed with, as no further required, and gives way to another. Infants, once baptized, stand upon their own ground as baptized persons, as adults do. And the question of their regeneration is settled in

the same way as that of adults,—viz. by the test of personal holiness and goodness.

But infants as such once allowed to have baptism in their own right, to stand on the same ground as adults, and to be subject to the same personal test of regeneration, they have, in the application of this test, one remarkable advantage over adults; for, whereas in the case of adults we can never be sure of their personal holiness, because we cannot penetrate the heart, in the case of infants we can assert such holiness with certainty, because the laws of nature are as yet a guarantee against the possibility of their having sinned. Whereas, then, the regeneration of adults can never be asserted with certainty, but only, however strongly so, as a probability or presumption, infants as such are, upon the above rule, certainly regenerate after baptism; and if they die as infants they are certainly saved.

The question which has been asked at the beginning of this chapter has thus been answered; and it has appeared, that in the case of infants as such the supposition of regeneration made at baptism becomes a positive assertion. But it must be observed that this conclusion in the case of infants as such is no exception or contradiction to the hypothetical nature of the assertion of regeneration at baptism, but only a further stage of that hypothesis—a stage in which it is in particular cases verified. A supposition is made in baptism that the individual is regenerate; but the verification of this supposition depends upon his own personal holiness. But who live holily? If we look to the grown-up portion of mankind we cannot say for certain who do; and therefore in their case regeneration still continues a presumption, and no more. But we know that infants live holily, because we know that they cannot do otherwise; the laws of nature are a pledge for a fact in their case, for which no external signs of goodness can be in the case of adults.

Infants, then, verify and fulfil to our certain knowledge

the supposition of regeneration made at baptism. But another distinction must still be drawn. This is only true of infants as such, and for the time; and therefore the verification which is as yet attained of this supposition is not *absolute*, but depends on the condition of the infantine age and state, and has respect to that condition. When does it become absolute? When the condition on which it depends becomes fixed and unalterable,—viz. when the infant dies in his infantine age. Previously to that the infant is regenerate *as such*, and relatively to his infantine age; but, inasmuch as he may grow up to maturity and manhood, and then live and die in sin, he is not regenerate absolutely. But death gives him the advantage of an unalterable infancy, and thus marks his regeneration as absolute, *i.e.* certain and ascertained.

The regeneration then even of the infant was no more than a supposition, as asserted of him at baptism; it attained its certainty by subsequent facts, and waited in suspense for the verifying stroke of death. The great assertion which introduces the body of the baptized to their spiritual course is a supposition in every case alike; but its fulfilment varies: it is fulfilled in some and not in others; and that fulfilment is in some cases ascertained here, and in others waits for its certification in another world.

The peculiar certainty, however, of the regeneration of infants may still be opposed upon one and that not altogether a slight or feeble ground. It may be argued with some force that, however, upon the supposition of infants possessing baptism *in their own right* and upon their own basis, such a certainty of regeneration in their case may follow; such a supposition is in the first instance erroneous; that infants are plainly admitted to baptism in no right of their own, but on the ground of the faith and repentance of other persons, accepted as substitutes for themselves; and that their admission to the rite thus taking place on a ground of supposition simply, their possession of the grace and privileges of it, after they have been admitted, must stand on the

same ground, and so be never any more than an hypothetical possession; that from a vicarious admission a vicarious tenure can alone follow, and that a regeneration which is based upon a supposition must itself be a supposition. It will be urged, that this is the natural and consistent mode of carrying out the original position of the infant as regards baptism, and that the change of the infant's baptismal position, *after* the rite from what it was *at* it, is but an arbitrary arrangement, a pious fraud to gain a particular conclusion, which cannot be obtained by sound or logical means; that the separation in his case of the two parts, outward and inward, of baptism, leaves a necessary interval of the natural and unregenerate state, which cannot terminate till the sacrament is completed, and the outer washing of the infant had its complement in the inner sanctification of the adult; and that to set up an infantine regeneration which has the advantage over that of adults in being certain or ascertained, is to give an advantage to those who cannot perform the conditions for it, over those who can, and to create a regeneration which is certain only because it is fictitious.

But to this it may be replied, that the practice of infant baptism at all implies such a change of ground as that which is here supposed. The practice of infant baptism indeed, to begin with, must be admitted to be a thing requiring explanation, and not wholly unattended by difficulties. For nothing can be clearer than that faith and repentance are laid down in Scripture as the necessary conditions of baptism, and, therefore, that the institution primarily applies to adults and adults only. But in whatever light we may regard the introduction of infant baptism,—whether we consider it as, however quick and early a one, an *afterthought*, or as a subordinate and oblique application of the rite simultaneous with the primary and direct one,—infant baptism, if allowed at all, implies the recognition of some right in the infant himself, when baptized, to the benefits and fruits of baptism. He may be brought to that sacrament, indeed, in the name

of another, or by supposing him to be for the time some one else; and his baptism may be thus, on his presentation to it, attached to another personality than his own: but it is impossible to disjoin, in our natural view of him *as baptized*, the grace of his baptism from himself. We may be referred, indeed, to some future day when he will be able, by personal faith and repentance, to appropriate it; but what are we to think of him in the meantime? Is he in no way affected by the sacrament? Is he exactly in the same state as if he had not been admitted to it? Can we have him as a baptized person before us, and altogether suspend the operation of baptism upon him, and regard him as wholly, for the present, untouched by it? We are compelled, then, to think that he derives, even as an infant, a privilege from baptism, that he has received what is plainly, as far as it goes, a mark of Divine favour, and that he differs in this respect from all infants who have not received such a mark.

If we suppose infant baptism to be carried on by Divine sanction, and in accordance with the Divine design, we must suppose this to be the consequence of it, and regard the infant on whom baptism is conferred as himself a direct object of Divine favour, so far as baptism indicates it. But the infant once allowed to possess baptism on his own ground, and to be capable in himself of regeneration, the peculiar result which has been mentioned in his case follows; for the test of regeneration being personal holiness, we are certain of the infant's holiness. And thus, for the lawfulness of that change of ground in the case of infant baptism, upon which this peculiar result follows, we are thrown back upon the practice itself of infant baptism, and upon the general argument and the evidences upon which that practice rests,—argument and evidences which are approved and accepted by the great majority of Christians.

It must not, however, be imagined that because the regeneration of infants as such is certain, as contrasted with that of adults, which is never more than presumptive, that

therefore regenerate infants are in a higher state then regenerate adults. The present question concerns not the regenerate state itself in infants and adults, but simply the evidence on which we judge them to be in that state. The presumptive regeneration of adults, as distinguished from the certain, follows simply from the general nature of probable evidence as distinguished from demonstrative. The character is the test of regeneration, and the character of a grown-up man is a contingent fact which is decided by probable evidence, just as other such facts are; while the character of infants is necessary, and the result of a law of nature. But the regenerate state itself is doubtless a much higher state in an adult than in an infant, as being the result of personal discipline, probation, and trial of the will.

This holiness of infants, with its peculiar characteristic of certainty, figures in the Augustinian system as, like all other holiness, the result of Divine predestination; and with their certain holiness, their certain regeneration figures as the result of the same decree. St. Augustine everywhere asserts that baptized infants, dying in infancy, are certainly saved, which is to say, that they are certainly regenerate; but when the grounds of this statement are explained, it appears that he regards such certainty of salvation as the effect not of their baptism alone, which would be wholly insufficient to produce it, but of, together with their baptism, something over and above it, viz., the certainty of their final holiness, caused by their early death, before exposure to the possibility of actual sin. This merciful relief again from trial,—this stroke which removes them from the world before any experience of its corruptions, any exposure to its snares, which takes them from the evil to come, and early calls them away, "lest wickedness should alter their understanding, or deceit beguile their souls,"—is the result of a Divine decree which from all eternity preordained it. The certain salvation of infants is thus the effect of a special Divine decree operating to their good, over and above the common

and promiscuous gift of baptism, and arranging for them in particular a certain final holiness. The gift of early death is in the Augustinian system one form of the grace of final perseverance: the same God who secures the elect adult from the bad effect of trial, saves the elect infant from meeting it, and gives victory in the one case, innocence in the other.

NOTE.

I HAVE assumed in this treatise that the alternative in the case of baptismal regeneration lies between an actual goodness which is hypothetically, and a capacity which is literally, possessed by all the baptized. Bishop Bethell, however, in the preface to his work on Baptismal Regeneration notices an opinion, entertained, it would appear, by some even now, that actual virtues and holy dispositions are infused into the minds of infants at baptism, and that this constitutes their regeneration. On this idea, then, as being an attempt to unite both points, *i. e.*, actual goodness as the sense of regeneration, with the literal bestowal of such regeneration on all the baptized *i. e.* all baptized in infancy, I will make one or two remarks.

In the first place, then, I must observe that this idea, if tenable, is wholly at variance with the more common and received doctrine of regeneration as a spiritual capacity simply, imparted in baptism; and that it would alter the whole of that more common and received language with respect to baptismal regeneration, founded on the latter supposition. For according to this idea, regeneration consisting in actual virtues and holy dispositions, would be coincident with such dispositions among the baptized; the infant would be regenerate so long as he remained such; the adult so long as he retained the holy dispositions imparted to him in infancy; but one who lost these holy dispositions, and fell into sinful habits, would be no longer regenerate. But the more common and received language, which is founded on the supposi-

tion of regeneration being a capacity, speaks of men as wicked and as regenerate at the same time. According to this idea of regeneration as a literal infusion of holy dispositions, however we might speak of all *infants* as regenerate, the growth of vice, carelessness, and irreligion after that age would prevent us from applying the term to the great majority of adults, that is to say, to the great mass of Christian society, to the Church as a body. We could not speak of their regeneration as a present but only a past fact, which would be a complete subversion of the received language to which I have referred, on the subject of baptismal regeneration.

But, in the next place, how is such an idea as this tenable? How can infants be talked of, with any show of reason, as having, or being, while infants, capable of having virtues and holy dispositions? For will any one reflect for a moment on what is *meant* by these words. We *mean* by virtues and holy dispositions, certain moral states of mind belonging to reasonable and intelligent agents; and this reasonableness and intelligence in the agent is essential to, and is part of, the very meaning of virtue and moral disposition. If a person then asserts that an infant, *i. e.*, one who is not yet a reasonable or intelligent being, has virtues and moral habits of mind, he is using these words in a sense entirely different from that in which they are universally used, and in a sense wholly unintelligible; *i. e.* he is using words without meaning, and asserting nothing at all.

But infants, it will be said, have the germ of particular dispositions and characters in them. They have. But what do we mean by the germ of a character? We mean particular latent tendencies in the natural constitution, which afterwards, as the infant grows up into a reasonable intelligent being, and according as, in this new stage of existence, he uses or abuses, cultivates or neglects these tendencies, become formed habits and dispositions. These tendencies, then, so long as they are latent, incipient, and elementary, and exist in

the being while he is as yet without intelligence and reason, are not virtues, are not moral habits and dispositions. When he has gained that advance in his condition, they may become such, but before that time they cannot be that which we mean by these words, and that which is essentially implied in these moral states.

Two schools in theology, however, and very opposite ones, have used a language to the effect that baptized infants are in possession of actual virtues and holy dispositions, which are imparted in baptism to them. The schoolmen held that "infants obtained grace and the virtues in baptism[1];" and the Council of Trent declares that "the grace bestowed in baptism is a divine quality inhering in the soul; a kind of brightness or light (*divina qualitas in anima inherens, et veluti splendor quidam et lux*), which not only effaces all the stains of our souls, but renders them more beautiful and shining; and that to this grace is added a most noble company of virtues. *Huic autem additur nobilissimus virtutum omnium comitatus, quæ in animam cum gratia divinitus infunduntur.*"[2] Aquinas argues formally for the truth of this position, and meets the objection that virtues in a being imply a *will,* which infants as yet do not possess, by a distinction between the will in power and the will in act; moral *habits* only requiring, he says, a will in power, though moral acts require a will in act — *habitus virtutum requirunt potentiam voluntatis, actus virtutum actum voluntatis.* Moral habits then, he concludes, or virtues, can belong to an infant, who has the will in power, though not the will in act; and an infant can possess the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, although he cannot perform any *act* of faith, hope, or charity. But this is verbal reasoning. What is meant by a will which cannot act, and by habits which have nothing to do with action? For, it must be remembered,

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[1] Summ. Theol. P. 3. Q. 69. A. 6.

[2] Cat. Conc. Trid. pars. 2. s. 50, 51. Syn. Trid. s. vi. c. 7.

the will and habits here assigned to infants are not only occasionally *dormant*, as true will and habits in adults may be, but radically *incapable* of exhibition in act. It is obvious that such a will and such habits are not what we mean by will and habits, and are simply unintelligible words, or words without meaning.

I can hardly believe, indeed, that divines of the Church of Rome ever seriously thought that infants at the breast had the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. All this language is, when we examine it, only a machinery of adjustment, to meet the doctrinal exigencies in which the schoolman finds himself, on the baptismal question. Scripture and antiquity regarded, by supposition and anticipation, the baptismal state as one of actual holiness and goodness, and spoke of all the baptized as citizens of heaven, and having the moral and spiritual dispositions suited for that condition. But in course of time, while all this language is retained, the hypothetical ground on which it was used is forgotten, and a literal one substituted. But a literal conveyance of all "the virtues" in baptism requires some *rationale* in order to make it square with facts. And among other facts which have to be met is the fact of infancy; that men are baptized in infancy, when apparently they cannot possess virtues or habits at all. Here is accordingly the *rationale* to adjust the difficulty;—the distinction between the will and virtues in habit, and the will and virtues in act.

A section of the Reformers, again, appears to have maintained the principle that spiritual habits and dispositions could exist in infants; and to have regarded infants as capable of having incipient faith. In a discussion between Luther, Bucer, and others on this subject, to the argument that infants could not, "as some maintained," believe of their own act, because they did not understand the words themselves of the Gospel which were the subject matter of faith, Luther replied, "that just as in sleep, we are counted believers, and really are such, although we are not thinking at

the time of God at all; so a certain commencement of faith, which was, however, the work of God, existed in infants, according to their measure and capacity, the extent of which we did not know; which commencement of faith he called faith."[1] Lancelot Ridley maintains that "children may have faith, though they have it not by hearing; yet they have faith by infusion of the Holy Ghost, as the holy prophets had, and many holy men in the old law had. . . . . Therefore, he continues, it is not impossible for children to have faith, as these Anabaptists falsely suppose. . . . . God regardeth no persons, but giveth his gifts without all regard of persons; a child or old man be counted as persons in Scripture: wherefore it followeth plainly that God giveth not faith to an old man, or denieth faith to a child because he is a child; for then God should regard persons, which he doth not."[2]

The Reformers, who adopted this position respecting infants, appear to have been led to it by a jealousy for the doctrine of justification by faith, and a fear to admit that Divine favour could be bestowed where there was not faith. Such a jealousy, however, was, upon their own theological system, wholly unnecessary; for if faith is the work of God in the human heart, the Divine favour must have existed before the work existed, and in order to produce it.

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[1] Hoc autem ubi in Scriptura fundatum sit, quod nimirum aliqui affirmant, infantes dum baptizantur verba Evangelii intelligere, iisque actu ipso credere, atque ita salvos fieri. Hoc ergo unde e sacris literis probari possit, videre huc usque non potuimus.

His rursum respondebat Lutherus: hanc suam suorumque sententiam non esse: sed sicut nos etiam dormientes inter fideles numeremur, et revera tales simus, quantumvis actu de Deo nihil cogitemus: ita initium quoddam fidei (quod tamen Dei opus sit) in infantibus extare, secundum ipsorum mensuram et modulum, quem nos ignoremus; atque hoc se fidem nominare.—Bucer's Scripta Anglicana, p. 655., quoted in Dr. Bayford's Speech, p. 115.

[2] Richmond's "Selection from the Fathers," p. 140., quoted in Dr. Bayford's Speech, p. 153.

THE END.

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